

## **Biography Dr Alka Kumar**

Dr Alka Kumar's interests and work span across disciplinary borders, from the arts and humanities to the social sciences. After a meaningful first career as an educator and Associate Professor in English at the University of Delhi, in India, she is currently exploring migration and economic integration related issues through a doctoral program in Peace and Conflict Studies at University of Manitoba. Alka lives in Toronto now and has a part time research position with CERC at Ryerson University.

Describing herself as a researcher-practitioner, Alka has worked with new Canadians in a service provision role, developing and delivering programs, supporting individuals through career transition counseling, employment pathways planning, and skills training. She views 'lived experience' and 'practitioner positionality' as critical lenses to better understand economic and social inclusion challenges arising from migration, seeing them also as important tools for solution-building. In her role as Research and Capacity Director for a women-led charitable national initiative called The Shoe Project, (See <http://www.theshoeproject.online/>), she currently manages the research portfolio while seeking funding and other opportunities to expand the reach of this program.

Additionally, Alka teaches Professional and e-Communication, and Business Writing in a Finance Bridging Program at Skills for Change. As a member of the York Region Community Partnership Council, she is part of a Local Immigration Partnership team that is developing policy driven initiatives to enhance social and economic integration for newcomers in the York Region.

**Presentations:**

1. Pedagogies for Social Change: Using a Social Justice lens in Counselling Education, June, (Peace Studies Conference, Winnipeg, 2015)
2. Proposed, organized, and facilitated Workshop on the Role of Reflective Practice for Educators, (TEAM Conference, 2015)
3. Victimization and Agency: Issues and Contexts for Refugee Women (Strangers in New Homelands Conference, University of Manitoba, Oct 2014)
4. Settlement and Labor Market Integration for Immigrant Professionals in Winnipeg (Strangers in New Homelands Conference, University of Manitoba, Oct 2014)
5. Researcher Positionality as a tool in the Peacebuilding field: Social Science Congress, (University of Victoria, June 2012)
6. Can Citizen Movements Create Alternative Governance Paradigms in a World Conflicted by Religious Extremism and Global Terrorism in Conference on Reinventing Governance, Center for Study of Conflict, Collaboration and Creative Governance at (University of Colorado, Boulder, Oct 2010)
7. The Maoist Conflict in India as an Environmental/Governance Issue during Roundtable Discussion on Social Justice and Power: When Multiple Interests and Environmental Issues are on the Fast Track towards Collision. Conference on Reinventing Governance, Center for Study of Conflict, Collaboration and Creative Governance at (University of Colorado, Boulder. 8-10 Oct 2010)
8. Pieces of Peace: Gender, Human Rights and Conflict Transformation. 8th Annual Peace and Justice Studies Association Conference on Building Bridges, Crossing Borders: Gender, Identity and Security in the Search for Peace. Oct 1-2, 2010. (University of Winnipeg, Manitoba)

**Publications:**

Paul Cormier, Peter Karari, **Alka Kumar**, Robin Neustaeter, Jodi Read, Jessica Senehi. "The Problem from Hell": Examining the Role of Peace and Conflict Studies for Genocide Intervention and Prevention. *Peace and Conflict Studies*. Spring 2010, 17(1):43-71

## Previous Publications

*Doris Lessing: A Journey in Evolution*. Published by Books Plus, New Delhi, 2001

'The Man Who Finds his Homeland Sweet...': Reconfiguring Identity through Rohinton Mistry and Michael Ondaatje in Charu Sharma ed. *Mapping Migrations: Perspectives on Diasporic Fiction*, New Delhi: Books Plus, 2006.

Reconfiguring Identity: Suniti Namjoshi's Diasporic Journeys in Jasbir Jain ed. *Dislocations and Multiculturalisms*, Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2004.

Feminist Issues: Action, Research and Women's Studies in Chandrakala Padia ed. *Feminism, Tradition and Modernity* Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2002.

Nation as Identity in *The Shadow Lines* in Arvind Chowdhary ed. Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines: Critical Essays*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002.

Narrator as Archaeologist: Feminist Communities in Margaret Atwood's *Wilderness Tips* in Jasbir Jain and Supriya Agarwal eds. *Gender and Narrative*, Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002.

Writing South Asian Canadian Diaspora: Amriika and Ideology in Makarand Paranjape ed. *Indiaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*, New Delhi: Indialog, 2001.

Tragic Form and the Problems of Narrativity in *The Mill on the Floss* in Nita Kumar ed. *The Mill on the Floss*, New Delhi: Worldview Publications, 1999.

*Doris Lessing: Towards Impossible Dreams* in The Book Review Vol XXXII Number 3 March 2008 (written as a tribute after Doris Lessing received the Nobel Prize).

Book Review: Vishwanath Tripathi's *Nangatalai ka Gaon* in The Book Review. New Delhi.

Book Review: Sukrita Paul Kumar's *Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas* in Indian Literature, Sahitya Akademi's Bi-Monthly Journal, New Delhi. (228, July-Aug 2005).

Book Review: Karuna Chanana's *Interrogating Women's Education* in Summerhill, IIAS, Shimla. (June 2002).

Book Review: Anjali Bhelande and Mala Pandurang eds. *Articulating Gender: An Anthology presented to Prof Shirin Khudchedkar* in Critical Practice ed. Jasbir Jain Vol 8 No. 2 (June 2000).

Book Review: Krishna Sarbadhikary's *Dismembering/Remembering: Fictions of Audrey Thomas* in Indian Journal of Canadian Studies Vol 7(1998).

Book Review: 'The Otherised Realm' Margaret Moan Rowe's *Doris Lessing in In-between: Essays & Studies in Literary Criticism* Vol.6 No.1 March 1997.

*Voicing the Other: Himani Bannerji's Poetics Of Protest* in CIEFL Bulletin (New Series) Vol.9, No.1 June 1997.

*Mad Shadows: Marie-Claire Blais' Gothic Critique of French Canada* in Panjab University Research Bulletin (Arts) Vol.26, No.1&2 April-October, 1995.

Doris Lessing's 'Free Women': A Study of Feminine Consciousness in *The Grass is Singing*, *Martha Quest*, *A Proper Marriage* and *The Golden Notebook* in Panjab University Research Bulletin (Arts) Vol 24, No.2, October 1993

Short Story, *Ahilya*, translated from Hindi to English. Published in TSAR (Toronto South Asian Review), Canada, Fall 2001.

#### **Previous international presentations**

Proposed, organized and co-ordinated a 3 speaker panel for MLA Convention 2008. Title of panel: **Hunger and Food as Literary Expressions.** Title of paper: *Genocide versus Survival: Hunger and Healing in Canadian First Nations Writing.* (San Francisco, 27-30 December 2008)

Paper presented at MLA Convention 2008. Title of panel: **Suzan-Lori Parks's 365 Days / 365 Plays: A Cross-Cultural Assessment.** Title of Paper: *Rethinking Dramatic Form and Meaning in 365 Days / 365 Plays: A New Form of Absurd?* (San Francisco, 27-30 December 2008)

Paper presented during the Second International Doris Lessing Conference. Title of conference: **Doris Lessing: Nation, Politics and Identity.** Title of paper: *Re-Configuring the New: Reading Doris Lessing's The Grandmothers (2003) and Time Bites (2004).* University of Leeds, UK. (6 - 8 July, 2007)

Paper presented during the Women's and Gender Studies Conference NWSA 2007. Title of conference: **Past Debates, Present Possibilities, Future Feminisms.** Title of paper: *Pedagogical Frameworks and Transnational Feminism: South Asian Contexts.* St Charles, Illinois, USA, (28 June-1 July, 2007)

#### **Newspaper articles:**

Approximately 20 creative pieces of varying length have been published in reputed daily newspapers and newsmagazines in India.