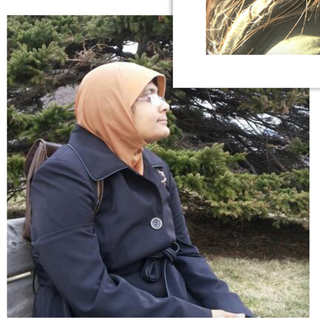
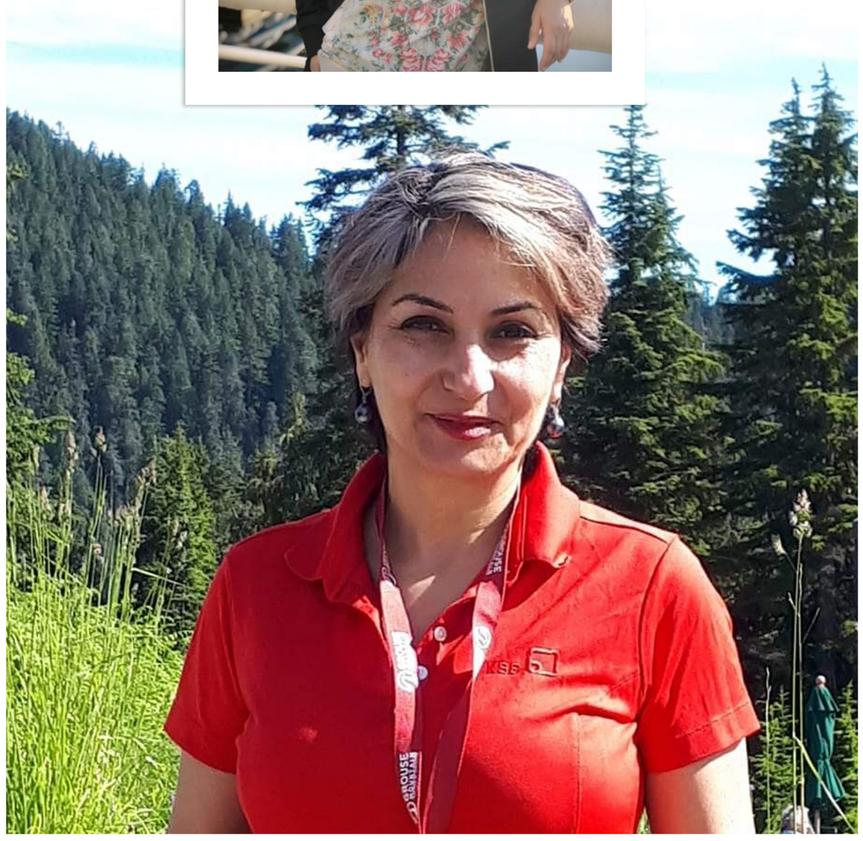




Between the lines...
Two byte stories

Culture Chats Writing Group

Acknowledgements

Culture Chats BC Association piloted a new Intercultural Women's Writing Project that culminates with the release of this booklet and a sharing event to present the writings on March 9th, 2019 at 11 am at the Tommy Douglas Library, Burnaby.

The project benefited from the support and collaboration of our sponsors and esteemed partners. Culture Chats would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of Vancity, Burnaby Neighbourhood House, Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table and Burnaby Public Library. The support and consultation of the professionals who have enthusiastically shared their expertise at our workshop sessions is also worthy of mention. These include Seema Ahluwalia a Sociologist and Faculty member of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Shauna Paull, Literary Arts Instructor at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts, Dr. Hajera Rostam, Researcher and Psychologist, Dr. Anna Griffith, Instructor for Theatre and Performance Studies at the University Of Fraser Valley. We also invited authors, digital content developers and emerging writers at our sessions. It was a pleasure to work with Zahida Rahemtulla, Sean Bassi, Gary and Sandra Wilson.

The stories developed by the Culture Chats Writing Group paint a vivid picture of community life. Many residents of our super diverse neighbourhoods in Metro Vancouver are straddling two or more cultures successfully. This has shaped their expectations and experiences in their present day to day lives. The writing group reflects this diversity and strength of the women who are community builder; who have absorbed many new influences and discovered common ties to bond with each other.

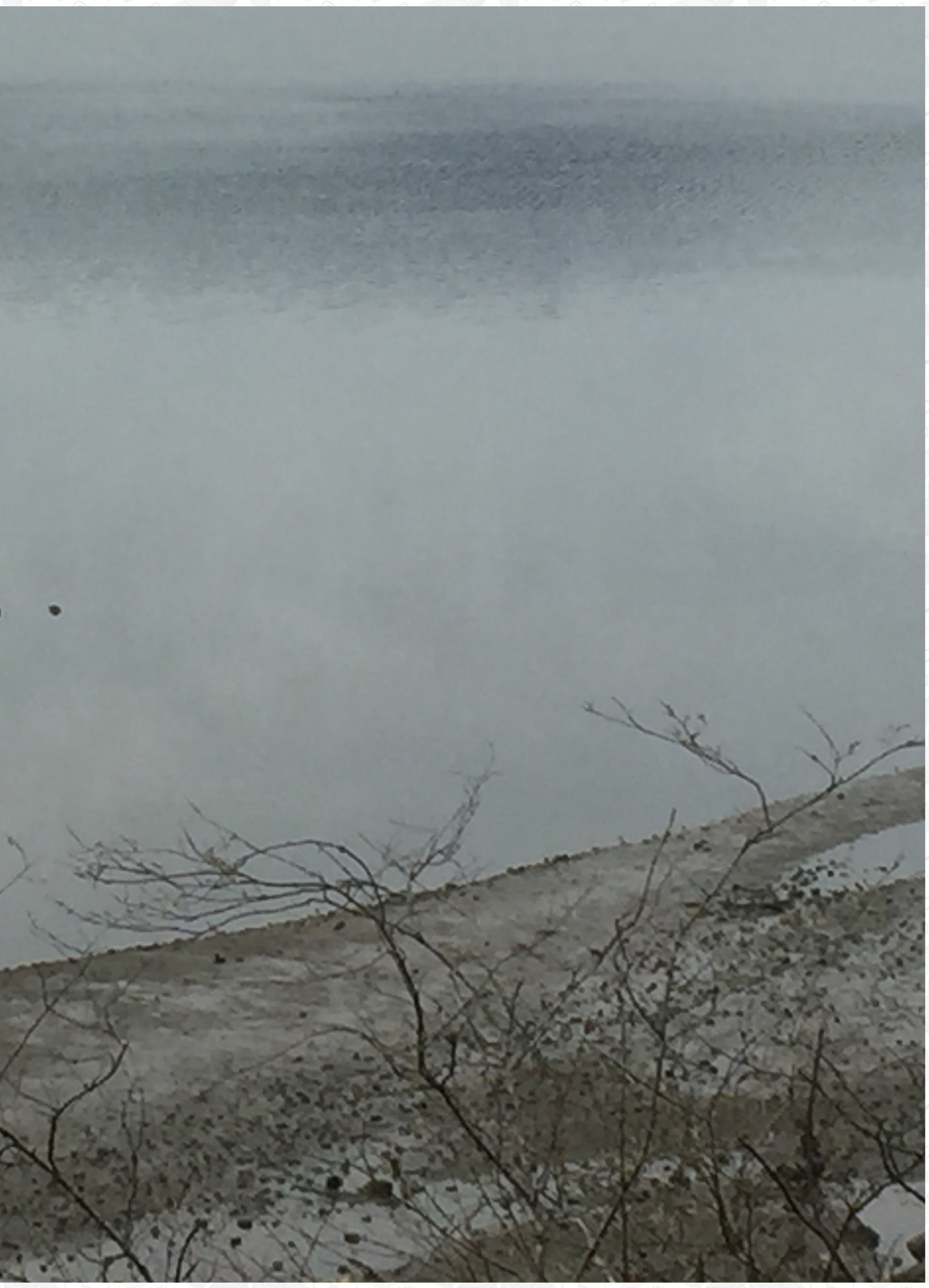
One of our group members, Blossom has this to say about her experience, "Culture Chats has provided me with an opportunity to feel at home in the company of women who have similar yet varied experiences; women who have an eye on their past and a hopeful outlook to their future…who are so brave to share their thoughts, challenges, aspirations and stories."

Adrianna, another writing group member adds, "Thanks to Culture Chats for setting in motion these chats among women who have come from different places and who are also beautiful souls and writers." Thank you to all the contributors to this project for their wonderful writing and contagious positivity making this a successful initiative.

Asmita Lawrence
Culture Chats

Vasana Chinvarakorn

Former feature writer with Outlook Section,
Bangkok Post, Thailand



My very first impression of Canada was formed long before I actually set foot in the country. As a Thai teen hooked on Hong Kong TV series, I remember toward the end of several productions, certain characters would announce they were going to start a new life in Canada. The name sounded to me like an alien far-away land covered by snow all year round. Being cold sensitive, twenty degrees Celsius was already freezing to me, I had neither dreams nor interest to live in such a place. But for the Hong Kong TV characters whose tumultuous lives had hit a dead end in their homeland, Canada was touted as a blank slate of endless opportunities where they could begin anew, redeem themselves through leaving the old world and its baggage behind.

I did not really have a chance to explore the northern country until many years later. I don't count the time I spent at UBC as a graduate student on scholarship as the memories seem more like a blur of perennial struggles to survive school. Settling down in the small town of Port Moody with my Canadian husband in 2014, I initially felt a little disappointed. My new home is so far from the centre of activities in Vancouver.

How I dreamed I could live near downtown where I would take a daily walk in Stanley Park, browse through millions of books at the public library, take interesting courses at either UBC in Point Grey or SFU's downtown campus, attend concerts or other public events that would nurture my endless curiosity. How I fancied a chance to travel across Canada with my husband and perhaps write something about what I learned. With family obligations that increasingly require me to be home-bound, I felt at times frustrated at the ironic turn of events: being in a vast country of opportunities but most seem to remain out of my reach.

Almost five years later, I figure I have managed to tolerate the cold weather better – except when the greyish sky prevails too many days in a row. Admittedly, there are moments I wonder what I am doing in this strange country. I think I say "I'm sorry" too many times (my husband often teases me that I am probably practicing to become a Canadian). I have discovered a couple of pursuits that satisfy my intellectual, and spiritual, needs, also something my husband and I can do and learn together. I have come to love my new home in Port Moody for its small size and quiet trails in the woods. I have grown to appreciate the little things in life I used to take for granted. I cannot say I have exactly found my voice, a path, what people call an identity, in this new home, but I have not yet given up on the search.

My vision of Canada as a country of super-abundance – of land and resources – has to be somewhat adjusted as soon as I step into its big cities. Coming from a developing country like Thailand, which is less than half the size of British Columbia but with a population more than twice the size of the whole of Canada, I know what crowdedness is like. After all, I grew up in a family of ten children who were used to sharing one bedroom for years. But I did not realize how seriously a similar symptom also threatens Canadian urbanites until I sat in a skytrain on my way to Burnaby and saw how very close a new high-rise under construction is to the train track.

As the train whizzed by, I imagined how inhabitants in those towers would have to adjust to the daily rumbling of countless cars and curious eyes of the passengers. Would they have to install very thick curtains to grant themselves some privacy, and to peek through the gaps instead when they want to look at the sky, sunset and/or sunrise, and panoramic views of the city they call home? I am aware that floor space in such buildings is not at all cheap. How many years do these folks have to toil before they can pay off the bank mortgages and claim full ownership to the box units?

And yet the people who can afford them are still faring much better than the homeless which I learn are on a steady rise, a chronic multi-layered issue city planners and politicians have yet to solve effectively. The “tent cities” have turned into a sore point of contention between the occupants and their home-owning neighbours, the city governments and the non-government organizations/activists, to name a few. Back in Thailand, the homeless are more or less a common phenomenon as far as I can remember. But I have no ideas how their counterparts here can survive the freezing cold temperature outdoors when I already find it difficult being bundled up in my well-heated house. It puzzles, and saddens, me whenever I hear about some campers found dead in their tents, or bin divers fatally trapped in donation bins that were supposed to solicit fund to help them in the first place. How Canada with its generosity in helping thousands, if not millions, of the poor and destitute around the world, has been unable to allocate land and resources to accommodate her own people remains a big question I have to delve more into.

And yet one trait of this new home I have come to appreciate is the kindness of ordinary Canadians, even among the homeless themselves. Once I was sauntering around Downtown East Side with a friend, when all of a sudden a car stopped nearby and out of it sprinted a fellow carrying big bags of fresh bread which he dropped on the ground before hopping back into the vehicle. Along came a man who opened the bags, took a couple of loaves, and left the rest for whoever was in need to pick through next. The scene took place in less than a minute but stays etched in my memories. For it shows me the one thing that Canada still has in ample supply.

Shokoofeh Mostofi

Pen name: Blossom
Job Title: Customer Service Manager
Languages: Farsi - English

My First Impression in a New City

High adrenaline was driving me through the lobbies of the airport. I had not slept in more than 24 hours. Having left the bag containing all our immigration documents in Frankfurt during the layover between the 2 flights had added to all the anxiety of arrival in a new city and a new country.
The mood in which I was though not only upon my arrival but long after had nothing to do with the mood of the city I had landed in.
If I could use only one adjective to describe Vancouver, I would say “relaxed”.
People jogging on the streets at 8:00 on weekday mornings, going to work wearing sneakers, and the most weird of all the coffee culture.
The coffee culture here is something you can write about pages and pages and not yet do it justice.
Previously my closest encounter with coffee was through instant coffee and of course Turkish coffee once in a blue moon. My staple drink was tea.

Here though I felt myself surrounded by coffee, banks, offices, stores! Don’t get me wrong, I loved the aroma but to me it looked like people could easily swim in pools of coffee the way they were consuming it. Why would people sip coffee as they walked or drove to work? How could they sit in coffee shops and pay 5 times more for just one cup, can’t they make it at home? Do they not have homes?
Soon I started noticing the patience with which people stood in lines and waited their turns, be it a supermarket or a bank. No one was nagging or begging others to let them go first as if they had all the time in the world and there was nothing more pleasurable than to stand in line. For a while I thought cars here came without horns because within the first couple of months in Vancouver not even once I had heard a honk.
Maybe they blinked when I wasn’t looking because their lights were on all day. Then I had an epiphany, it must be because of coffee.
Well, when in Rome do as Romans do. After my next trip to the garage sale I was the proud owner of a coffee maker. It took me some time to be able to drink one full cup and not get jittery or lose sleep for a couple of nights but I am no longer a stranger to coffee and neither to the city.

The Road Less Traveled

I step out and close the door behind me.
The sun is out,
The leaves of the neighbour's plants are shiny from previous night's rain
And a spider has captured the beads of water in its web like strings of transparent pearls.
I start my walk on a carpet of red oak leaves,
I feel exhilarated like a celebrity who steps on the red carpet for the first time
I fill my lungs with fresh air, the heaviness in my heart subsides and unpleasant thoughts give way to happier ones,
My steps feel lighter
And I keep thinking of “the road less traveled”!

Friends

I don't have a sister
But I have some very good friends
You may never know how important it is
Till you plunge in void and loneliness

My life is full of kindness
Big chunks of it here and there
The hug that I give and receive every morning
To which there is no compare

Sometimes when I drink to pretend happiness
While sorrow oozes out of my every pore
There is a friend to drink with me
Because apparently this is a friend's chore

A little advice here A little knitting lesson there
An hour talk over a cup of coffee
Or God forbid over a pint of beer

It doesn't solve your problems
It doesn't pay your debts
But you have someone who listens
No matter how hard life gets

Nabila Huq

Nabila is a proud English Literature graduate from the University of Dhaka (DU) in Bangladesh. All the sweet memories of her youth are crystallized around DU campus – if only she could travel back in time to those days, she would! Nabila has two other realistic dreams, too! She wants to pursue a PhD in Creative Writing, and become the kind of writer everyone wants to read while sipping from their tea cups or coffee mugs.

It Was the Similarities that Shocked Me

The day I arrived in Winnipeg was a hot summer day at the end of August. The moment I came out of the airport, a splash of hot breeze hit my face. I asked the university staff who came to pick me up, "this is the city of Winnipeg, right?" just to make sure that the plane did not accidentally return to Bangladesh. I arrived in Winnipeg via St. John's though. St. John's was hot, too, at that time of the year, and it, too, shocked me. I was expecting Canada to be always cold! Even after living in St. John's for about a month or so, I was still expecting Winnipeg to be cold all year round – because what I had been warned about! The extreme opposite weathers between the two countries. Little did I know that the weather is only the first of the many similarities that would take me off guard in Canada…

To be continued…

Indecision

“So, did you do the exercise we talked about in our last session?” the shrink asked, “What decisions did you make?”

Sabeel handed over a list to her. It was a list of possible career tracks she may or may not pursue in the upcoming years. There was plan A and plan B. Sabeel was confused! Chances are, it would be too late to go after plan B by the time she has found out if plan A had worked out for her life or not.

But the shrink, Professor Shaheen dismissed the list right away, “No, no, this is not what I was talking about! These are not decisions! Tell me about the decisions you took since last week.”

“But these are the decisions I took!”, Sabeel was clearly surprised.

“No, they are not. Okay, let’s talk about today. What decisions did you make today?”

“None.”

“Of course, you did! What is the first thing you did when you woke up?”

“I made a cup of tea.”

“See, you decided to make a cup of tea.” Professor Shaheen nodded her head.

“What?!”, Sabeel said, “How can that be a decision? I have to have a cup of tea every morning; otherwise, I cannot function – I cannot proceed with the day! Besides, it helps me…” Sabeel fidgeted as she felt greatly embarrassed, “it helps me with my constipation. If I have a strong cup of tea with milk after I have drunk a glass of water every morning, it helps with my bowel movement. Otherwise, I would feel so…so… uncomfortable…”

She rubbed her right ringer on her left palm and left cheek over her shoulder as she laid out her morning routine in front of the shrink.

“See”, Professor Shaheen gleamed, “you chose to have bowel movement easily. You could choose to live with your discomfort.”

Sabeel stared at her in disbelief! Is she for real? Or is Professor Shaheen very subtly trying to drive her away with such non-sense?

Ten years later.

Sabeel now lives in Canada. She is in her mid thirties and still does not know what to do with her life. She is doing her job alright, but it does not give her the fulfillment of a career; her job is nowhere near her credentials. Should she go back to her homeland? No! No!! No!!! How could she go back? After all, all her in-decisions started there… At least, Canada has brought peace in other aspects of her life – well, most of it. She still makes a cup of tea first thing in the morning. As each sip of caffeine alleviates every cell in her body from last night’s sound (or sometimes, not so sound!) sleep, she sinks into a day dream…she hopes her life will find a purpose very soon. Tea always transports her to a fantasy world.

Sabeel takes the last sip from her cup. This is the one thing that has not changed in the last decade of her life. And now she has to rush to the toilet before she can face the day.

My accordion started to talk

Osnah

Accordionist Player, Accordion Teacher, Professional Aspirations: Free Base Virtuoso, Music Composer
Languages spoken: English, Japanese, Chinese

“Some things on this earth:

A primary school headmaster changes the main teachers of the class his son is in every year from Grade 1 to Grade 5 until his son become one of the top students in the class. In Addition, his son also has the most good looking girl as his desk mate.

When you wanna become the best professional in the industry,
your boss deceptively saying he would like to support your pursuit.
But what he is really plotting in his mind is: trying to make you work
for unlimited extra hours without corresponding compensation, or even worse,
becoming a 24 hr slave of him/her.

One Girl group made of 4 bully a two years' younger girl of the same grade in all ways they can.
Finally, a teacher showes up.
Are you comes it finally ends poor fate of the victim girl? You are wrong.
The teacher came in blaming the poor girl and wished her leaving school soon.

You might learn selfishness, ill will, cruelty, hatred, meanness,
harshness, hostility, indifference, mercilessness
Before you know what kindness is.

When you see a Well-dressed man, followed by a dressed up woman as a repeater, recorder, bragging with exaggeration how magical their product is, how people of victims of cancer regained healthy In front of a group of senior old men and women who are expecting to have a longer life span, or who are in fear illness or in desperate need of treatment.

Mixing Cultures

Osnah's retweet, rephrase of Taran Patel's ideas in his book, "Cross-Cultural Management: A Transactional Approach".

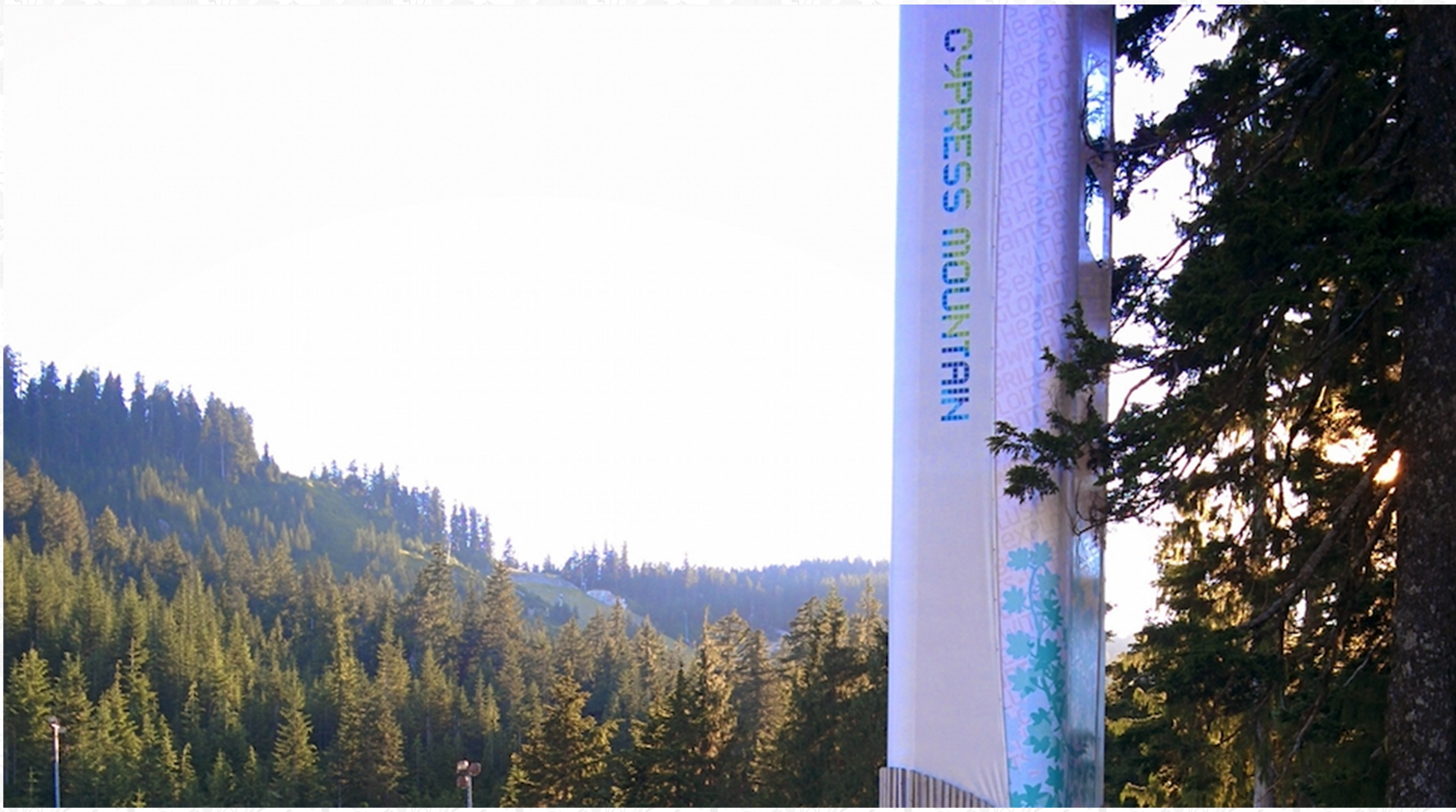
What does it do by categorizing people into static groups based on their geo-ethnic identities and categorizing them as "French', 'Indian', 'German', or 'American'? [1]

What makes a culture unique is its own blend of external and internal influences and its ever-changing boundaries, especially under 'multinational' and 'global' context. [1]

Steering away from a 'difference-oriented lens', can a social entity be posited as a nexus in which a variety of internal and external influences come together having boundaries conceptualized as being permeable, moveable and fluctuating, thereby allowing for intercultural penetration and cultural changes. Cultures and subcultures could be nested, overlapping and multiple, and could have blurred edges. [1]

References:

[1] Patel T., 2014, Cross-cultural Management: A transactional approach, Routledge.
By Taran Patel



Nasiba worked as a teacher and in nonprofits. She was interested to write poems since was child. She is currently writing about the life of single mothers without status in Canada.She is also working on a project to support single mothers by organizing works shops about immigration and family law.

Nasiba Jumabayeva

Your Daughter

Angelina opens her eyes and listens hoping to hear footsteps of her father on this special day of her birthday, he usually knocks her door at 7 in the morning and brings flowers. He sits on the side of her bed and smiles. When he smiles his hazel colour eyes gets even brighter, warmer and cleaner like a mirror and you feel like the whole world is right there. He kisses gently first on her right cheek and then on her left and says: Happy Birthday my princess!! “Did you invite your friends to your castle across the bridge? “

No dad, I didn’t think that I would celebrate my birthday this year!” I don’t feel like it, I feel sad..” Dad replies, “I know you are sad because you didn’t get these flowers today!” He gave her a beautiful bunch of twelve pink roses to match her age today, “I love them Daddy! Thank you!” She jumps out of bed and hugs her father tight “

“So would you be interested to start calling your friends to show what you got for your birthday?” Mark asks hopefully. “I already asked your mom to start cooking and make some preparations for the party” - “Yes! You are always good in convincing me, she says through her smile.

He calls Mama, “Lora! Can you come here please?” A petite woman in her forties enters the room smiling, “Did you call me dear? - Yes I did! Mark replies and just hugs his wife on her waist, she is way shorter than him and looking at this couple you would think…coffee with milk. She has white skin, she is half his size. Mark is a tall man with olive skin. Angelina looks at them and smiles with so much love in her eyes thinking when I grow up I really want a man beside me just like my dad! Lora lifts Angelina in her arms and they both go to the living room, where as is their tradition, Angelina’s mom tells her story about the special day…

I woke up at and already at 7:00 in the morning we were on our way to see my doctors, your dad soothed me and asked you “are you ready to come to this world” and you were born at 8:30 in the morning! When the nurses brought you, I said them: Oh no! It is a girl! I was expecting a boy! “Ha-ha-ha! Well your mom… all throughout her pregnancy she was it would be a boy! But what we think does not always happen, it can get even better than what we expect! He blows a kiss at Angelina.

Lora continues “and when I looked at you, I was shocked and said: Oh no! You changed her. Not only is she not a boy, she has dark skin! She is definitely not mine!! Ha-ha-ha! Laughed Angelina “Of cause you forgot that your lovely husband has beautiful dark skin”! Everyone laughed. “Yes! True. I didn’t think about that. Because both your sisters and your brother were born with pale skin like mine, she smiles- I didn’t expect that, you would be darker!

Your dad returned at 9 am just right after you were born with beautiful roses so many of them it was huge basket, I couldn’t see his face I could just see his fingers trying hold this basket and bring it into the room. It made the room look so beautiful and so bright. And of course I didn’t care that I got a girl instead of boy! I was so full of love and your daddy winked and promised me each year this day would be the same...But not this year unfortunately…she takes a deep breath.

Suddenly Angelina wakes to hear a wheezing sound. She looks at her clock. It is 7 am. She wakes up from her deep sleep and rushes out. Is dad OK? asks Angelina with worry in her voice, turning to go to her father’s room, not even waiting for her mother to respond. Another old memory flashes before her eyes of when she was two, sitting on his lap and playing with his teeth. He would pretend that he wanted to bite her and she would quickly take her finders out of his mouth. She has heard this story too many times before. Usually he would come from work and pick her up, walk to the living room and sit on the old rocking chair which was covered with a baby blue and white blanket. He would put her on his lap and they both looked at the bridge together from their window. They would play that game, how she giggled and laughed. Even though she knew that he wouldn’t really bite but still she would scream and rush to take off her finger from his white teeth.

But today the strong man is lying on bed hopeless and weak. His feet are almost blue and swollen, his knees were weak he was not anymore that strong man. He is in pain. Just pain just pain after this accident at work.. she tries to not cry and came closer to her dad. His teeth look not so white but he is still serene in the darkness that morning. Angelina feels hurt watching him. He is very sick, very weak. I want my strong daddy she thinks. I wish that I would be sick instead of him. She is crying when he turns and spots her in his room by his bedside… He is awake and as soon as he recognizes her, he smiles, “Here is my princess!!!” Happy birthday!!! He wishes her and she feels the power of his love.

Adriana Suarez

In Colombia, I used to be text editor and write corporate articles. Sometimes I dreamt of publishing my personal writings. My goal is to start my own blog about how to find your inner self in a world that constantly calls you out.
I came to Canada five years ago with my son, Tobias, who is 8 now, and my husband, Rodrigo. I have read them everything I have written for this Culture Chats Program and they always cheer me a positive feedback. My lovely son is so excited about this whole project that last night he sat down by my side and gave me some useful tips that he learned at school.

The self and the other

I feel abandoned, not by anyone else than by myself.
When my eyes are covered by darkness I can see even clearly: Emerging from the thick forest and mixed with the trees a beautiful face from a noble woman makes an appearance. She does not follow me like the Renaissance pictures do. She just stares at me, from my dream, as if I am the picture she is looking at. Not searching for something else, like I do.
I wonder, who she is and where her broccoli-like thick hair comes from.
I knew of another forest. I have been there. The trees are lighter, like celeries. I remember this old shaman seated on a long canoe crossing the brown river. He does not belong to any time. This is not a dream. He looks at me as well, but instead he follows my eyes, smiles and wave good byes.
Both the woman and the shaman, I see them from the skies.

I still remember

At the beginning it was you and me. Maybe a young and innocent whisper alongside with a soft dance. I can't say. Happily, I can't remember.
As I can't recall how I do feel now.
Let's start counting, because numbers are important. A zero can harm or it can bring advantage. Out of twelve the ninth wounded me the most. It will be thirteen my lucky number?
This phantom with whom I owned one prosperous and humongous house, surrounded by countless big trees, infinite tasks to do and a legion of people in charge, used to inhabit what I consider my realm today.
Stepping in and out randomly in my spectral worlds without any approval he putted me on an altar, not to worship me, but to burn me. I got lost counting the scratches.
Should I give a name to everyone of it instead, and try to see if it hurt less? I am not good at Math, but I used to have a good memory.

Remembrances

Winter in Vancouver is relatively mild. But if you ask me it is cold like hell.
Please, do understand me. I was born and raised in Colombia, in a cool, wet temperature region that drops no lesser than 10 degrees Celsius during the day. In the highlands, there are people living in colder zones called “páramos”. So, unlike me, for the same question about cold weather, a person who lives in there might answer very differently.

One winter day was sunny in Vancouver, and I decided to go for a long walk. Robson Street, in Downtown, was full of people from all over the world. I counted French, Japanese or Korean, Farsi and Spanish passing by me at the same time, let alone the people who were not talking.

On the improvised track I made I remembered I needed groceries for home. To get the food I like I go to a handful of places. I buy tortillas here, Asian seasoning and dates over there, brownish tomatoes at this other place, fresh cheese somewhere else, and so on. I can spend week after week getting the provisions. No rush. That sunny day I ended up carrying all the foodstuff within a large, rectangular box. I decided to take a bus instead of a taxi. The bus was standing still and the driver was waiting for the right time to start the engines. When I entered the entire vehicle was waiting for me to choose any chair. No other passenger but me. Isn’t it neat when you must bear a rectangular box?

I sensed something earlier: somehow everything was the same but different. - An electrical vehicle yet, I thought. But the smell! And the look! I said in my mind but not out loud. And picked a spot to sit down and place the box. Once I was settled I looked closely and recognized the aroma.
I remember that whiff from my childhood! At the beginning of the school year there were lots of new supplies made of plastic. That was a time when humans were naive (I don’t want to say careless) about the contaminating attributes of this material.

In the bus the colours were shinier than usual, the textures sharper, the edges brighter, the cushions definitely softer, and new features were added for the passengers’ safety. I was happy to sit on the cushiony chair way before it gets flattened. - Mint car, I thought. And suddenly I had a memory of the stiff and fluffy plants of the “páramos”. Please, do understand me!

Shanga Karim

Journalism and advocacy work in womens organizations.
I was a voice for those women who faced honour killings, FGM, and violence in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq.

Languages: *Kurdish, English.*

First Days

"We have a meeting with a lawyer" my husband reading the mail which came in the brown envelope. Yes, I said, finally we have a lawyer Great! How can we get to go to Vancouver to see our lawyer and then maybe to the beach for a walk?".

I asked. "You need to take three buses to Surrey and one skytrain to get to Vancouver then one more bus to take you tothe lawyer's office" my husband replied.

"No, No, No, I am not taking that many buses I exclaimed with a still happy face looking forward to going to Vancouver from Abbotsford where I lived. I wanted to spend time in Vancouver and walk all around the city and visit all the landmarks. My husband was looking at me, and said in a serious voice "Shanga , It's the only way we do not have a car yet!".

"We woke at 5 am. We start walking past the beautiful lake which was between the house and the first bus station.It looked beautiful with the white lillies but I feel only sadness.

We reached Vancouver after many hours and were so happy to find our lawyer's office after walking around the same place three to four times! We walked in and knocked the door. I was fretting.How will it be? What will he ask? How can I answer with my little English?
A man in a suit unlocked the door. "Do you have appointment?" I said "yes"."Ok wait", he said that without looking at us or giving us a smile, I stopped smiling and tried to be serious like him.

After a few minutes, he opened the door and said "come on in". We tried to sit on the chairs unsure whether to say anything or not. He looked so busy."Who is Shanga"? I said "me" quickly.
He said "tell me about yourself". I felt relieved. "I am from Kurdistan, I was a journalist and I had to leave because….." "Stop stop", he started to ask me specific questions and I tried to answer, but he seemed frustrated and I felt stupid. He told me to slow down, "Don't answer my questions before listening". Then he brought in an interpreter who shookhands with us and said "chawaanibashi" in Krmanjikurdishdialect...

We started again, with questions and answers,the interpreter rounded his head to us and asked "tanaskrd?" My mind froze.I asked my husband, can you translate it for me please? I don't understand the interpreter's Kurdish dialect!The lawyer is perplexed. "It's the same language! Why you don't understand each other?? If you listen carefully, then you can understand."

In Kurdistan I was fighting for women who suffered from lack of respect in society, but here in Canada a lawyer was chiding me and everything was going wrong! We finished our first meeting without understanding each other. We missed one bus from Aldergrove to Abbotsford and the next one will come after an hour and half. Then we will go home walking past the lake without seeing it's beauty.

Elvia Pinilla *Worked in Media*

Excerpts of my life in this city:

Family time

The days are shorter, and the lights of the city brighten our apartment view. I am making dinner while my kids are playing and drawing in the dinner table. Music is playing in the background. My little boy approach me in the kitchen and ask me to put a song for him.

He puts his slippers on and the music star playing. He starts dancing in the middle of the living room and asks me to join him. We have had this beautiful moment a lot of times. Every time seems better than the last one. I dropped everything I was doing and start dancing with him.

It is a song from a movie which has a tap dance portion and that is the reason he is wearing his slippers as they pretend to be tap shoes. My daughter joins us. The view of the city, the sound of the "tap shoes" and the three of us holding hands dancing. A magical moment that make us have our own little world of love.

Quiet moments

It is a crispy cold afternoon. Suddenly in my busy and eclectic life I have a moment for myself. Sometimes I question myself why I will do when moments like this happen. It is ironic how in your mind you have a desire for quiet moments and when you have them, your mind goes blank. I started walking around the same places I normally go to. Things, people, all appear so different when your mind is free. The seawall seems so different, the ocean's water, the reflection of the sun into the water, the boats, the birds, the air. Everything seems so new for me. It is like I have never seen them before. It is like the first time in those spots of the city. I smell a different air. I see a different sun

Rainy Days

Moments in life makes you realize how fragile you can be.

Being strong most if my life from the outside does not mean that you are strong from the inside. You can see yourself in a mirror to see how fragile your soul is. Life has changed a lot lately. One day you realize that some of the things that you have worked for fell apart. Having the feeling of the rain over your head every day is a sensation of sadness. Sometimes it is so wet over your head that those drops of water block your vision.

Born to be blue is playing in the back ground. Chet Baker one of the best Jazz musicians of all times. Well at least for me. Blue is the color of sadness. Blue is how you draw drops of water. Having the feeling of rain over your head. Sometimes is so wet that is just impossible look ahead. How can you get so wet in that rain and continue? How can you force yourself to see the sunlight even if is cloudy and rainy?

Hopeful Days

In the kitchen floor a curly woman with a lot of laughs starts her day. She never worked in a professional kitchen before although she loves to cook. When life gives you lemons you squeeze them and create margaritas, or mojitos or caipirinhas!!! She is strong she has the power to create anything from scratch.

Life is one and she is living it with all her heart and soul. Living and looking forward to more overwhelming days full of ups and downs but mostly full of happiness and love.

Culture CHATS