



**VII International Congress on Migration & Mental Health
*Youth & Families Wellbeing matters in the context of Migration***

20th October 2018 – Brussels

Familles du Monde, asbl & The Athena Network



**THE IMAGE OF WOUNDED EXILED BODIES IN
MEENA ALEXANDER AND AMINA SAÏD'S POETRY**

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The talk I propose will draw on works by Amina Saïd (1953 - ; francophone) and Meena Alexander (1951- ; anglophone) whose poetry is largely shaped by their experiences of displacement. Exile is presented above all as a painful and deathly experience, synonymous to separation, absence, solitude and fear.

Throughout their lyrical verse, both Amina Saïd and Meena Alexander's writing presents wounded, solitary, dying, dismembered, mutilated bodies, female bodies torn in two during childbirth, bodies burdened under the weight of a feminine and subaltern identity, oppressed by violent colonial history. Extremely medical terms also surface. Why do they develop such a bodily and medical metaphor of the pain of exile?

This bodily representation is noteworthy: while all migration is firstly the movement of a body through geographic space, the experience of exile is essentially lived inwardly. Its wounds and scars remain invisible. The writing process enables a healing process at the same as this intangible experience takes on a material form. Finding the words and a poetic form to express the void and pain of exile is spurred on by a desire to survive and in this sense carries a vital quality.

It will be aim to examine the images of wounded and exiled bodies, the literary techniques employed to develop an aesthetic of fragmented and broken bodies, as well as the cathartic role of writing.

Keywords:

Poetry - Exile - Woman - Body - Expression of pain

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