



CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES

**Inventory of the
M.G. Vassanji fonds**

Inventory #F0485

The digitization of this finding aid was made possible - in part or entirely - through the Canadian Culture Online Program of Canadian Heritage, the National Archives of Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives.

F0485 - M.G. Vassanji fonds

Fonds/Collection Number: F0485**Title:** M.G. Vassanji fonds**Dates:** 1976-2012**Extent:** 3 m of textual records

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** Moyez G. Vassanji (1950-), author and nuclear physicist, was born in Nairobi, Kenya and raised in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He began his studies at the University of Nairobi but left in 1970 to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Vassanji later completed a Ph.D. in nuclear physics at the University of Pennsylvania. He immigrated to Canada in 1978 to work at the Chalk River atomic power station in Ontario. Vassanji moved to Toronto in 1980 to work at the University of Toronto as a research associate and lecturer, and soon began writing fiction. He edited "A Meeting of streams : South Asian Canadian literature" in 1985. His first novel, "The Gunny sack," was published in 1989, and was awarded the 1990 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best first novel (Africa). That year, he and his wife, Nurjehan Aziz, founded "The Toronto South Asian review," a journal devoted to South Asian Canadian writers. It was renamed "The Toronto review of contemporary writing abroad" in 1993 to reflect the wider community of immigrant writers in Canada. Vassanji gave up his work as a nuclear physicist in 1989 to turn his full attention to writing. He is the author of six other novels: "No new land" (1990), "The Book of secrets" (1993), "Amriika" (2000), "The In-between world of Vikram Lall" (2003), "The Assassin's song" (2007) and "The Magic of Saida" (2012). He is also the author of two collections of short stories - "Uhuru Street" (1990) and "When she was queen" (2005) - as well as the memoir, "A place within : rediscovering India" (2008), and a biography of Mordecai Richler published by Penguin Canada in 2009 as part of its Exceptional Canadians Series. He is the first repeat winner of the Scotiabank Giller Prize, winning in its inaugural year for "The Book of secrets" and later for "The In-between world of Vikram Lall," and was shortlisted for the prize for "The Assassin's song." Vassanji was made a Member of the Order of Canada in October 2004 for his contributions to writing and the arts, and an honorary Doctor of Letters by York University in June 2005. "The in-between world of M.G. Vassanji," a television documentary about his life, was first broadcast in 2006.

Scope and Content: Fonds consists of research material, notes, drafts, edited manuscripts, and proof pages for M.G. Vassanji's novels, collections of short stories, and non-fiction; scripts for an unfinished television project, "The Abdullah quartet"; unpublished drafts of poems and fragments of stories; research material on politics, religion, violence, and society in India from historical and contemporary perspectives, and arrangements for Vassanji's visits to India; drafts of his articles for Maclean's on social unrest in Africa; and drafts of his lectures on writing, cultural identities, and diversity given in Canada and Great Britain. The fonds includes correspondence with publishers, copies of articles related to his work, publicity material related to his writing and to awards, and correspondence regarding his work as a teacher of writing. The fonds also contains material regarding his academic and professional activities as a nuclear physicist including course outlines, notes, essays, and offprints of articles authored or co-authored by Vassanji.

**Restrictions on
Access and Use:** Access to these records requires prior written permission from M.G. Vassanji. Researchers seeking access must make written application to Dr. Vassanji through the University Archivist, outlining their research project and their purpose in consulting this fonds.

Finding Aid: File lists are available.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000485.htm>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2005-034, 2008-046, 2011-003, 2013-007. Further accruals may be expected.

F0485 - M.G. Vassanji fonds

Immediate source of acquisition: Donated by M.G. Vassanji in 2005, 2008, 2011, and 2013.

Provenance Access Points: Vassanji, M.G.

Date of creation: 2005/12/07

Date of last revision: 2013/12/10