

Chapter 2

South Asian Diaspora in Australia: History, Research, and Literature

People have been migrating since the dawn of humanity. Many of today's diasporic groups, particularly the Africans, Chinese, Palestinians, Armenians, Jews, and South Asians, to name a few, have had long histories of travel away from original homelands. However, during the past 100–150 years these diasporas have been recorded, documented, and analyzed for their economic, political, and cultural impact (see also Jupp 1998; Bates 2001). Migration in this rapidly globalizing world has not just spread the roots of diaspora deeper but also put it on a global level by concretizing it as a natural and inevitable result.¹ South Asian-Australians have played an important role in the spreading of new ideas and thoughts. This can go a long way in making diasporic cultures more interesting. A matured understanding of the achievements and the contributions of the South Asian-Australians to the home/hostland cultures can help build a liberal world.

Despite this fact of nearly simultaneous migration, the Indian subcontinent has been 'a blind spot to most Australians during the one hundred and eighty years of their history' (J. D'Cruz 1973: p. 31). Australians were present in South Asia as advisers, technicians, teachers, diplomats, journalists, but most of all as soldiers and seamen for the Empire (see Walker 1999). They engaged with their neighbours—the South Asians—through travel, study, art, and literature (see Macintyre 1999: pp. 207–208), and hence this blind spot is not the result of lack of access to the subcontinent. The History of migration from South Asia is also rich in stories and metaphors of our civilization and, to borrow a phrase from Judah Waten (1952), its 'imperishable peoples' immense arc of influence that lies far beyond their own subcontinental shores, like the metaphor of the 'banyan tree' spreading its roots in several soils. The banyan tree and its branches taking 'root' in different soils have been consistently used as metaphors by scholars across time to represent this human movement or transplantation across borders. According to Bhiku Parekh, a mal-leable migrant '(F)ar from being homeless, (...) has several homes, and that is the

¹The concept of globalization and diaspora formation is clearly an ongoing process related to global flows (see Kelly 1998).

only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world' (quoted in Mahanta 2004: p. 13). Noted Indian writer and poet Rabindranath Tagore perceived 'the Indians going overseas as taking their Indias of the mind with them, and recreating new Indian colonies in the lands of their adoption' (quoted in Tinker 1977: p. ix). Tagore writes:

To study a banyan tree, you not only must know its main stem in its own soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality. The civilization of India, like the banyan tree, has shed its beneficent shade away from its own birthplace (...). India can live and grow by spreading abroad – not the political India, but the ideal India. (quoted in Tinker 1977: p. iii)²

Yet, the controversial writer, Salman Rushdie ridicules the very idea of metaphoric roots in his novel *Shame* (1983), when he writes: 'to explain why we become attached to our birthplaces we pretend that we are trees and speak of roots. Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through the soles' (p. 86). For Rushdie, 'roots', are 'a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places' (p. 86). This debunking of the metaphor of roots, as a culturally constructed idea, supports the view that human beings were, are, and will remain mobile and rootless (see Jin 2008: p. 22). However, as Sissy Helff (2009) notes, this view cannot accommodate the characterization of migration as a life and death prospect for many South Asian migrants. For some migrants boarding the ship and crossing the *Kala Pani* (black waters) meant transgression³ and thereby a loss of cultural identity—'the sorrow of the passage across the black water' (Paranjape 2007: p. 354). Furthermore, Rushdie (1985/1991) being a migrant himself is more ambivalent on the issue of loss of cultural identity and suffering than the earlier quotation allows us to surmise:

A full migrant suffers, traditionally, a triple disruption: he loses his place, he enters into an alien language, and he finds himself surrounded by being(s) whose social behaviour and code is very unlike, and sometimes offensive to, his own. And this is what makes migrants such important figures: because *roots*, language and social norm have been three of the most important parts of the definition of what it is to be a human being. The migrant, denied all three, is obliged to find new ways of describing himself (...), new ways of being human (...). (p. ix; emphasis added)

While these theoretical approaches to diaspora and diaspora consciousness are relatively new, migration is an old phenomenon in the history of South Asia—be it internal or external. The contemporary migration of people from South Asia to Australia is marked by much cultural traffic—there is the exchange of ideas that takes place on large scale through festivals, art exhibitions, film screenings, and others—as well as 'academic traffic'—exchange of students, research scholars, and

²Rabindranath Tagore in a letter addressed to C.F. Andrews when contemplating a visit to Java.

³As *Kala Pani* represents the taboo of the sea in Indian culture, the fear of crossing the *Kala Pani* also derives from the notion in Hinduism that it entailed the end of the reincarnation cycle, as the traveller was cut off from the regenerating waters of the Ganges. Migration across this has often meant losing one's caste privileges and having to reinvent oneself.

faculty members through various exchange programmes, seminars, MoUs, academic associations, personal visits, awards, and scholarships, writers-in-residence programmes, joint publications, and so on.⁴ These two trends—cultural traffic and academic traffic—have also resulted in producing a more refined or nuanced awareness and common knowledge base about South Asia, which though known to Australia for centuries was consciously overlooked as it belongs to the group of countries that are part of what is pathetically called ‘the third world’.

According to Vinay Lal (2004, 2009), the South Asian or third world diaspora is an ‘incontestable fact of contemporary history’. But many Australians had and still have mixed feelings about South Asia and therefore about the inward bound streams of migrants (refugees and asylum seekers included). It is, however, an undeniable fact that Australia has been built on migration with people from over 230 different countries, speaking more than 300 languages, and practicing more than 100 religions constituting the ‘fair dinkum Aussie’ of today. Migrants from South Asia, the most populous region in the world, comprising India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives, have contributed enormously to the rich cultural life and diversity of Australia at both the local and national levels. They also continue to enhance progressively the nation’s economic and political landscape by adding to its cultural mix through involvement and achievements in businesses, literature, educational, and other related activities.

Under the pull of capitalism, all countries in South Asia have experienced migration since the early nineteenth century. One of the challenges in writing about the South Asian diaspora in Australia is the nature of the beast: what are the various migration and entry points into Australia. In the next section, I will focus on typology of migration patterns to Australia from individual South Asian countries.

South Asians in Australia: A Brief History

Migration is the most dominant feature of Australia throughout its history—be it the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1788 or later the coming of free settlers, voluntary migrants, indentured workers, and so on.⁵ The earlier groups, apart from the British, were Irish, Germans, Scandinavians, Poles, Hungarians, European Jews, Greeks, Italians, Lebanese, Latin Americans, Dutch, Yugoslavs, and Turkish. Most of these ‘groups’ were running away from religious persecution (see Jupp 1998), or were in search of better living standards, or were free settlers, or entrepreneurs attracted towards the Gold Rush, mining, railways, vast ‘virgin’ untillied lands, and other Australian industries, while a large number came from poverty-ridden or troubled

⁴Student migration is an example where ‘migrants become agents creatively opening routes into Australia using regulations that were put in place for other purposes’ (Voigt-Graf 2003: p. 155).

⁵The 2011 Census reported that over one in four of Australia’s 22 million people were born overseas. The number of settlers arriving in Australia from more than 200 countries between July 2008 and June 2009 totalled 158,021.

(war ridden) countries as ‘displaced persons’ (see Jupp 1998). The coming or intake of indentured workers from South Asia and China began at the same time, but has gone unnoticed till the advent of the ‘Asian’ economies on the global arena since the globalization of South Asia. The South Asian diaspora in Australia refers to the scatter of people of Indian subcontinental origin who are living in various parts of the world outside of the Indian Subcontinent (Clarke et al. 1990: p. 1).

To begin with India, the largest number of people of Indian origin⁶ has migrated to Australia only since the 1980s. But if we look at Australian history, its earliest inhabitants, the Aborigines arrived from the Asian continent via the islands of Indonesia and the Malay Archipelago 40,000 years ago.⁷ They probably originated in South India and from here they made their way to Australia via Ceylon, Malaya, and Indonesia, thus making the Veddas, the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka, a possible connection in the migration chain (see Weerasooria 1988; Flannery 1994; Smith 2007). According to C.D. Narasimhaiah (2000), Australia’s first inhabitants the Aborigines are ‘our (South Asians’) common ancestors’ (p. 24). Arguably, they can be considered the first South Asian immigrants, if not diaspora; however, the time lag makes these ancient connections a matter for archaeological study, far away from the realm of literary or narrativial probing. Nevertheless, even the more recent immigration history of South Asians and more particularly Indians in Australia with accurate statistics, data, and evidences is yet to be written.

Indian immigration to Australia⁸ began largely as the result of a desperate shortage of labour. Adrian Mitchell (2000) observes that Australia–India connection

⁶For a detailed discussion on migration from India, see Tinker (1977), De Lepervanche (1984, 2007), Rajkowski (1987), Bilimoria and Ganguly-Scrase (1988), Chandrasekhar (1992), Bilimoria (1996), Narasimhaiah (2000), Joshi (2000), Bilimoria and Voigt-Graf (2001), Faria (2001), Lakha and Stevenson (2001), D’Souza (2002), Ray (2003), Jayaram (2004), Prasad (2005), Dale (2005), Kenna (2006), Sharrad (2009), Baas (2009), Westrip and Holroyde (2010); “Indian Diaspora—A Short History”; “Indian-born Community in Australia”; “Jains in Australia”; “Hindu Council of Australia”; “Anglo-Indians—Family Tree”; “Indians in Australia (Anglo Indians)”; “Indian Arrival in Australia”; “Queensland Aust-Ind Association”; East Indian Club of Melbourne, 2004; “The Indian Diaspora: 2004–2005”; Sivasupramaniam (2006); “The Indian Diaspora”; and DIMIA, “The Indian Born Community—Historical Background” and “Main Migrant source for Australia is India.”

⁷According to Associate Professor Richard Roberts from University of Wollongong, there is little consensus between researchers about the timing of this event, estimates pertaining to this initial occupation range from 125,000 years before present to as recent as 40,000 years ago, see “When did Australia’s Earliest Inhabitants Arrive?” (2004).

⁸The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated resident population (ERP) at June 2011 was 22.55 million people. In the 2006 census, 153,579 Australian residents declared that they were born in India and this number increased significantly to 340,604 in the 2011 census, making India the largest group in Asia for overseas-born residents. For a detailed discussion on South Asian, particularly migration, see Hugo (1992), McMahon (1995), B. Lal (1996, 2006a), Walker (1999), Bates (2001), Carter and Torabully (2002), Kinsella (2003), V. Lal (2004), Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2007); “Immigration to Australia”; “Conference on Australasia’s Diaspora”; “Regional South Asia”; and “South Asians are Forgetting Their Roots.”

...begins of course with the First Settlement, with the transport of ships heading off to India when once the convicts had been off-loaded; and soon after that the founding colony was sending off to India for grain, both to feed the colony and for grain seed. By the 1890s there was a small informal immigration programme under way – which is to say politely that India was supplying cheap labour to private individuals. Indians were working as builder's labourers in Albany as early as 1835–36. A number of British who had been in India settled in Australia and brought the household retinue with them (...) the physical presence of Indians developed throughout nineteenth-century Australia, and we find the evidence of that here and there – growing maize in Gippsland or as hawkers throughout the rural districts, confused by undiscriminating Australians with the Afghanistani camel-drivers. (pp. 19–20)

It is an oft-repeated observation that the first South Asians to reach Australia travelled on Captain Cook's ship in 1816. A significant number of Indians were brought to Australia in the early nineteenth century to work as labourers—on agricultural lands and in the gold fields, as domestics and hawkers. Many more Indians were brought to Australia thereafter to run the now famous 'Camel trains', which transported goods and mail on camel backs in the desert. These Indians, part of the first wave of migration to Australia, were important in keeping the communication and supply line open between Melbourne and Central Australia. Many of the earliest Punjabis (chiefly from the northwestern Punjab region) arrived in late nineteenth century and also took part in the rush for gold in Victoria. Punjabis, comprising mostly the more enterprising Sikhs, came to work on the banana plantations of Southern Queensland. Today, the descendants of these migrants have their own banana plantations and farms and are fairly rich. The establishment of the Sikh community would not have been possible without the welcome, tolerance, and even encouragement of the existing Australian community.⁹

According to Makarand Paranjape (2007), 'Punjabis came to Australia about the same time that they went to Canada, that is, around 1907. Apparently, the regiment that was destined for Canada, actually went via Australia. When they returned to India, they brought back stories of unlimited stretches of land waiting to be farmed and settled in two continents' (p. 349). This second wave of migrants arrived around the World Wars I and II, respectively. Indian soldiers were present in Gallipoli (1915) fighting for the British armed forces alongside the Australians. Also, after India's Independence from Britain in 1947, another important group of South Asians, namely Anglo-Indians, migrated in large numbers to Australia. They arrived on the scene as 'British subjects' exercising the choice to settle permanently in Australia.¹⁰ It has been noted that Anglo-Indians were present in Australia from the earliest years of European settlement, including a few convicts. The Anglo-Indians have been immigrating to Australia in relatively large numbers since the early 1960s and were, in fact, among the first Asians to immigrate in the

⁹For a detailed discussion on Sikh migration from India, see Tinker (1977), Bilimoria (1996), Gabbi (1998), Bhatti and Dusenbery (2001), De Lepervanche (2001); "Indian Arrival in Australia: Sikhs in Australia".

¹⁰For a detailed discussion on Anglo-Indian migration and settlement, see Moore (1986a, b, 2001, 2007), Jupp (2001), S. James (2001), Z. Phillips (2004), Blunt (2005), Assisi (2006), Crane (2009); "Anglo Indians Pioneers and Prodigies".

1960s–1970s with the relaxation of rules for entry of persons of mixed descent to Australia.

The third wave of migrants began arriving in Australia immediately after the whites only policy (Immigration Restriction Act 1901) was abandoned in 1973 and adaptation of the Multicultural Policy in 1975. Australia's political, economic, and social stability proved magnetic for these new migrants, who saw Australia as a land of opportunity. They consisted mostly of teachers, doctors, engineers, businessmen, software, and hardware professionals, the Fiji-Indians, who came in large numbers to Australia after the two coups in Fiji and finally, the relatives of settled Indians in search of greener pastures.

An independent Indian-Australian writer and documentary filmmaker Surinder Jain accidentally traced the antiquity of the South Asian diaspora in Australia. While working on his documentary in 2005 on the 'places of spirituality and places of pilgrimage in Australia', he discovered a cave that looked like an ancient place of worship most probably used by South Asian Hindu labourers or pioneer immigrants. He says about the experience:

I was wandering in the hills of Ex-Mouth when I was stopped in my tracks by a snake. An eagle (Garuda) came to my rescue and led me to a cave. I went into a state of trance when I entered the cave and noticed God Vishnu and Goddess Laxmi along with Ganesh in its central chamber (...). I noticed a face on the side of the hill. It was also perhaps a natural formation of stones but looked like a Dwaarpal (temple guard) of the temple that I had just visited.

This amazing discovery of, which may perhaps be, an old Cave Temple, on the 9 August 2005, in the remote hills of Western Australia inspires us to trace the antiquity of South Asian diaspora in Australia. Jain is not sure till date if what he 'saw was an ancient temple in ruins or just a natural rock formation with a spiritual force', but this discovery does hint towards the antiquity of the Indian presence in Australia—the labourers or some earlier Indian or Sri Lankan immigrants.¹¹

A connected history is that of the Pakistani-Australian diaspora, a group whose origins in Australia are co-mingled with the Indian history due to accidents of history peculiar to the subcontinent, like the Partition of India first into India and Pakistan and then further of Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh. So, the history of migration from Pakistan¹² to Australia in search of opportunities begins from

¹¹The work of *Pratibimb*—Indian Cultural Community of Australia (ICCA), a nonprofit organization on popular networking website—is also commendable. Its membership is open to all and aims to be a reflection of the Indian population in Australia. The objective, according to its creator Navneet Choujar is to 'bring together talented individuals/groups under an umbrella to protect and promote them, and evoke the diversity of the rich Indian cultural heritage. There are no religious boundaries, no caste barriers; we do not speak about political affiliations or financial tie ups. Let us come together with a common cause—our culture!' ('Pratibimb' 2009).

¹²For a detailed discussion on migration from Pakistan, see Tinker (1977), Rajkowski (1987), Rauf (1994), Deen (1995, 2003, 2005), Bates (2001), R. Hassan (2001), Rasool (2002), Cleland (2002), S. Hassan (2003), Fijac and Sonn (2004), Lal and Mahboob (2006), Casimiro et al. (2007); 'The Urdu-Speaking Community in Australia'; 'History of Immigration from Pakistan'; 'Pakistani Australian'; 'Pakistan Australia Friendship Association'; 'Pakistan Association of Australia'; and FECCA, 'Pakistan': 2005; and Victorian Multicultural Commission (2008).

undivided India. A large number of migrants presently known as 'Pakistani-Australians' have their origins in India, that is, their ancestors migrated before the partition of India in 1947. As has already been mentioned, Indian immigration to Australia has a longer tradition in Australian history that goes back to around 1800 when a small number of Hindu labourers, from various northern regions, were brought into the country for contractual work. Late in the mid-1860s, the Afghans or popularly-called 'Ghans' in Australia came from Karachi, Punjab, and Kashmir (the parts that are now in Pakistan) as camel men. They made a very crucial contribution to the exploration, development, transport, and building of the first overland telegraph line across the continent from Adelaide to Darwin and of the trans-Australian railways across Australia's far-flung regions—a contribution that is well noted in Pamela Rajkowski's *In the Tracks of the Camelmen: Outback Australia's Most Exotic Pioneers* (1987). The immigrant population from what is now Pakistan subsequently dwindled because of the White Australia Policy, as many left Australia and returned 'home'. Post-partition Pakistani migration has a relatively recent history. Pakistani nationals started coming to Australia in the 1960s but a large number came in the late 1970s and 1980s as students, professionals, and their dependent families under various plans and schemes of the Australian government—under the Humanitarian Programme and the Skilled and Family Migration Streams (see Rajkowski 1987; Deen 1992). Immigration from Pakistan increased significantly in the 1990s and by 1996 the Pakistan-born population had more than tripled. However on the other hand, scholars like Abdur Rauf believes that migration from Pakistan is inseparably linked with the arrival of Muslim traders in Australia since Pakistan's port cities, especially Karachi, served as link routes to Australia from the Middle-East countries and further deduce that Pakistanis themselves must have accompanied or followed these traders into Australia. In other words, this school of thought dissociates the Pakistani migration pattern from that of pre-partition India by linking it with the migration of Muslims to Australia from around the world. According to Abdur Rauf (1994),

The exact date when the first Muslim arrived in Australia has not been ascertained so far. However, the remains of settlements and cemeteries of the sixteenth century Macassar Muslim fishermen have been discovered in the southern coast of the continent.

More concrete evidence to support the claim is yet to be found. Today, the majority of the Pakistani-Australians are making a substantial contribution to the process of development of the Australian continent.¹³

¹³Pakistan-born Australians have also played a significant role within local Muslim organizations, and have contributed to the development of independent Muslim schools and language programmes throughout Australia. A number of Pakistani associations also support this community, the oldest being the Pakistan Australia Association (PAA) formed in 1959.

Next to Indians, the largest numbers of migrants who have made their presence felt are from Sri Lanka.¹⁴ As mentioned earlier, the first recorded Sri Lankan immigration to Australia was in the year 1816 aboard Captain Cook's ship, with the transportation of Drum Major William O'Dean (a Malay) and his wife Eve (a Sinhalese) from Sri Lanka. It was in the late nineteenth century that the first significant number of Sri Lankan immigrants came to Australia (1870s), under the category of labour migration, specially recruited to work on the cane plantations of Northern Queensland, in the gold-mining fields in New South Wales, and as pearl-ers in Broome, Western Australia.

Following Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 and the political ascendancy of the dominant ethnic group, the Sinhalese, minority Sri Lankan groups such as the Tamils and the Burghers felt endangered and began migrating to various countries including Australia as humanitarian entrants or political refugees. During the 1960s, Burghers comprised the largest number of Sri Lanka-born migrants to Australia. By 1986, there were 22,519 Sri Lanka-born persons in Australia. While many were fleeing the political instability because of the conflict in Sri Lanka between Tamil separatists and the Sinhalese, a fairly large number of professionals were also compelled to migrate because of a stagnant Sri Lankan economy and unemployment. The case of the Sri Lankan Burghers,¹⁵ the most Westernized and English educated of the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, resonates in some ways with that of the Anglo-Indians. They are a Eurasian ethnic group, descendants of European colonists (mostly Portuguese, Dutch, and British), from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, who intermarried with local Sinhalese and Tamils. During the last few decades, the number of Sri Lankans entering Australia has been steadily increasing, with the majority of Sri Lankan-Australians located in Victoria, Western Australia, and New South Wales. They prefer to identify themselves based on ethnicity, for example, Sinhalese-Australian, Tamil-Australian, or Burgher rather than the putative homogeneous group identity 'Sri Lankan-Australian'. Sri Lanka-born immigrants are over-represented in professional and clerical occupations particularly in health and community services.

Australia did not consider South Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan to be of any strategic value in the past. But because of the recent migrations of professionals and skilled labourers from South Asia, the structure of Australia's population intake from these countries has increased relatively. Australia on its part is now also supporting the national governments and civil society organizations in various sectors in the South Asian region in relation to projects dealing with

¹⁴For a detailed discussion on Sri Lankan migration, see Endagama (1981), Pinnawala (1984), De Jong (1987), Weerasooria (1988), Vanden Driesen and Vanden Driesen (1997), C. Vanden Driesen (1997), C. Vanden Driesen (2004), Sparkes and Shukul (2004), Karunarathna (2008), Lalthlamuanpii (2009), DIMIA, "The Sri Lankan Born Community"; "Sri Lankan Australian"; FECCA, "Sri Lanka"; Sivasupramaniam (2006).

¹⁵For a detailed discussion on Sri Lankan Burgher migration, see Ferdinands (1995), Vanden Driesen and Vanden Driesen (1997); "Burgher People"; and "Burghers."

HIV-related research, education, human resource development, water purification, environmental sanitation, institutional reforms, good governance, and so on.

Migration from Bangladesh to Australia began in the 1970s due to the War of Independence from Pakistan in 1970, and Bangladeshis were first counted separately in the Australian census in 1976.¹⁶ By the early 1980s, there were perhaps approximately 200 migrants in Australia from Bangladesh, nearly all professionals. In the mid-1980s, they were joined by some students pursuing tertiary studies. Between 1991 and 2001, there was a dramatic increase in the number of arrivals from Bangladesh, with the number growing to 9,000. While some arrived as a result of Skilled and Family Migration, others were accepted under the Humanitarian Programme.¹⁷ The 2001 Census estimates that as a consequence of recent relaxation in immigration policies, particularly relating to students, this number must have now grown to about 13,000–14,000 (approximately). The majority of Bangladeshis live in Sydney with a smaller though significant population in Melbourne, Canberra, and other regional capitals as well.¹⁸

One of the most beautiful countries of South Asia, Nepal is also making an inroad to Australia with its migrants.¹⁹ The door to Nepalese skilled labour was opened in the 1980s, long after the abolition of the White Australia Policy. Sydney saw the influx of skilled migrants and private fee-paying students from Nepal. Australian universities also encouraged Nepalese students to come to study in Australia on scholarships. The number of private Nepalese students studying in Australia has been on the increase with 24,500 enrolments in November 2009, predominantly in vocational studies. Some Nepalese families migrated to Australia looking for a safe home after the outbreak of the insurgency in Nepal. Thus, the Nepali community grew tremendously over the years and is still growing. According to Basundhara Dhungel (2000), one of the important experiences of migrant families from Nepal in Australia is the spotting of ‘new opportunities, new

¹⁶For a detailed discussion on migration from Bangladesh, see Tinker (1977), Bitel (2005); “History of Immigration from Bangladesh”; “Bangladeshis in Australia”; “Bangladesh Australia Association, Canberra”; and Commercial Wing, Bangladesh High Commission (2005).

¹⁷For a detailed discussion of the changing nature of Australian Immigration Policy, see “An Overview of Australia’s Migration Program”, 2013.

¹⁸The community has active social and cultural networks such as the Australia Bangladesh Council of Victoria (ABCV), which promotes Bangladeshi culture and supports newly arrived migrants. Similarly, the Bangladesh Australia Association, Canberra, is an integral part of the Canberra multicultural community that represents people of Bangladeshi origin. For more than two decades, the association has been a strong participant in Canberra’s multicultural life and has actively promoted cultural diversity and harmony in the Canberra community. Bangladeshi-Australians have also lend a helping hand in the economic development of Bangladesh and in forging Australia–Bangladesh relations because of the repatriation of foreign earnings, highlighting key business areas in which Australian entrepreneurs should be interested and by providing a platform for bilateral cooperation in other fields between the two countries.

¹⁹For a detailed discussion on Nepalese Migration to Australia, see Dhungel (2000); “Nepal Australia Friendship Association”; “Nepal: Country Brief”; “Nepalese Association of Victoria”; “Nepalese Australian Association”; “Nepalese in Australia Protest against Laxampur Dam”; and “Sagarmatha Nepali Restaurant.”

lifestyle, new intimacy, and companionship' (p. i). Australia and Nepal celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations in 2010. Nepal–Australia interconnections are mostly based on tourism, education, and Australian assistance in various activities since 1960s. Many Australians have also visited, as tourists and foreign aid workers, the only Hindu Kingdom in the world and have returned home with a great fondness for the Nepali people, their ethnic culture, and culinary culture. The first and so far the only man-made cave temple dedicated to the Lord Shiva, the Mukti Gupteshwar Mandir, also known as the Minto Hindu temple, was made by the Nepalese community in Australia. To make the bonds between the two countries stronger, there exist a few associations in Australia. Foremost among them is the Nepalese Australian Association (NAA) established in Sydney in 1976, which has helped Nepalese-Australians with a range of issues, from emotional and humanitarian ones. Its other objectives include assisting the newly arrived Nepalese, whether they are students on scholarships or short-term visitors, and to act as an unofficial embassy in providing information about Nepal to Australians.²⁰

Similarly, a small but fair number of tertiary educational scholarships for Bhutan have provided Bhutanese students with an opportunity of visiting Australia and pursuing various professional courses.²¹ Initially Australia agreed to resettle Bhutanese refugees from Nepal under the Humanitarian Programme over a number of years as part of a coordinated international strategy. According to the recent census, the Bhutanese community in Australia is very small. To date, more than 750 Bhutanese have resettled in different parts of Australia. On 13 May 2009, approximately 300 Bhutanese gathered at Olympic House at Franklin Street, South Australia, showcasing their food, culture, dance, and singing to celebrate the first anniversary of their arrival in Australia. The community's progress in Australia has been phenomenal and for the children, teenagers, and youth the future holds a lot of promise.²²

²⁰Other prominent associations include the Nepal Australia Friendship Association (NAFA) formed in January 1989 in Queensland (a nonpolitical, nonprofit aid organization dedicated to assist communities and individuals with projects that improve the quality of life in Nepal), the Nepalese Association of Victoria (established in 1997, aims to promote the interests of all people of Nepalese origin living in Victoria and also to promote Nepali culture, heritage, and goodwill between Australia and Nepal), the Gorkha Nepalese Community and the Nepalese-Australian Welfare Association (both located in Sydney) have also been playing a key role in promoting awareness about Nepalese communities in Australia. On a lighter note, perhaps, one might note that the one 'Nepali' phenomenon that has most vividly registered upon Australia has been the Nepali-run restaurants in various states of Australia—Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, and Brisbane—these have helped publicise, in however limited a fashion, the kingdom's rich cultural heritage in Australia.

²¹For a detailed discussion on Migration from Bhutan, see "HM Birthday Celebrations in Sydney"; "Bhutanese Community Profile"; and "Question on Notice—Bhutan Refugees."

²²The Australia–Bhutan Friendship Association (ABFA) works hard to promote relations between Bhutan and Australia, with a very consistent, well defined, and focused programme of co-operation. Australia's support for a number of development programmes in Bhutan through its aid programmes and projects such as building roads, education, and providing better health care services has also brought the two countries together.

For some South Asian migrants, Australia was only the journey, not the end, being ‘a stepping stone on a route eventually reaching the United States, a country which continues to be the ultimate desired destination for many Indians’ (Voigt-Graf 2003: p. 143). However, recent changes made in Australia’s migration policy will make access to a good education and opportunities possible for deserving students (Valentine 2010). So it is worth concluding this history of the South Asian’s migration to Australia with Vinay Lal’s pertinent observation in the “Diaspora Purana” (2003). Lal thinks that the South Asian diaspora has

come out of the shadows in recent years, and its largely forgotten history, which encompasses narratives of displacement, migration, the cross-fertilization of ideas, and the emergence of new cultural forms and practices, is increasingly being viewed as an important and intrinsic part of the story of late modernity and humanity’s drift towards globalization, transnational economic, and cultural exchanges, and hybrid forms of political, cultural, and social identity.

It is these hitherto ignored histories of South Asian migration to the antipodes that this collection will recuperate and assess.

Researches on South Asian Diaspora in Australia

South Asians in Australia, as noted above, still only make up a small proportion of the population as a whole, although their total numbers have grown rapidly since the early 1990s. South Asian diasporic literature has, according to Tamara M. Athique (2006) ‘in a relatively short space of time, achieved commercial and critical success’ and ‘come of age’ (p. 1). Today, critics and reviewers speak of ‘unprecedented attention’. This high profile is also related to South Asian diaspora’s ‘visibility in other areas of cultural production, notably in film, music, and fashion’ (Athique 2006: p. 1). Although critical books on and by the South Asian diaspora are not many—small but significant researches have steadily increased in number akin to the achievements of the South Asian diaspora during the last decade. This is attested by the plethora of recent publications and conference calls for papers, and academic interest in the South Asian diaspora. Some well-organized and thoughtfully conceptualized historical studies of the South Asian diaspora by academics often belonging to South Asian communities or led by scholars belonging to other racialized minority groups in Australia have helped to reveal the complex historical processes and the limitations of past research done by Anglo-Australians.

Today, nothing can alter the fact that South Asians have become an integral part of the Australian social order. The diaspora has helped in opening up borders between cultures and has inspired various critics and scholars to theorize the diasporic condition in relation to its historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and personal contexts (see A. Sarwal 2006). The dilemmas of the migrants ‘become more poignant when migrants find that despite all their new opportunities, they still remain aliens at their destination’ (Ballard 1994: p. 9) and no attention is paid

towards ethnic issues such as the achievements of their communities or to the multicultural education of their children.

The study of South Asian diaspora, in recent years, has emerged as an important branch of both social sciences and literature. In India according to N. Jayaram (2004), the study of overseas Indians has evolved through three phases:

1. *The cultural perspective phase* that focused on the study of cultural dynamics of the diasporic community, particularly on the questions of cultural continuity and change, identity, and integration, and resilience and adaptation.
2. *The structural perspective phase* with its focus on the study of structural dimensions such as gender in Indian diaspora, caste in Indian diaspora, regional identities in Indian diaspora, and the issues of racial discrimination.
3. *The political phase* that focuses on the role of the Indian state and its diasporic policy. Three questions in particular: (a) What has the Indian state done for the Indian communities in various parts of the world? (b) What has the Indian diaspora done for or against the Indian state? (c) What should the Indian state do to cultivate and harness the Indian diaspora as a resource for Indian development? (pp. 15–43)

Similarly, critical literature on South Asian diaspora in Australia can be distinguished into three major groups: historical, anthropological/sociological, and literary analyses.

Sociological and Anthropological Research

There are relatively more historical, anthropological, and sociological studies available on the South Asian diaspora in Australia, most notably *Indians in a White Australia* (1984), *The Anglo-Indian Vision* (1986a), *The Lotus and the Rose* (1986b), *In the Tracks of the Camelmen* (1987), *Complexities of the Sri Lankan Migrants in Australia* (1987), *Indians in Victoria (Australia): A Historical, Social and Demographic Profile of Indian Immigrants* (1988), *Links Between Sri Lanka and Australia* (1988), *From India to Australia* (1992), *Proud and Prejudiced: The Story of the Burghers of Sri Lanka* (1995), *Caravanserai: Journey Among Australian Muslims* (1995), *The Hindus and Sikhs in Australia* (1996), *Sikhs in Australia* (1998), *Indian Daughters Abroad* (2000), *A Punjabi Sikh Community in Australia: From Indian Sojourners to Australian Citizens* (2001), *The Muslims in Australia* (2002), *My Journey Behind the Veil: Conversations with Muslim Women* (2002), *Australia for Pakistanis: Where Cultures Meet* (2003), *A Passage from India: Anglo-Indians in Victoria* (2004), *The Anglo-Indian Australian Story: My Experience—A Collection of Anglo-Indian Migration Heritage Stories* (2004), and *Colonial Cousins: A Surprising History of Connections between India and Australia* (2010).

Pamela Rajkowski's *In the Tracks of the Camelmen: Outback Australia's Most Exotic Pioneers* is a ground-breaking study that records the contribution of the 'Afghan' camelmen or cameleers—mainly men from northern India and

Afghanistan—in the opening up and development of the Australian colonies (pp. xi–xii). She writes:

They were a network—bringing together the many dispersed settlements around the gold-mining fields of Western Australia and connecting them to larger supply and coastal service centres; connecting the sheep properties of South Australia's far north; passing up the Strzelecki, Birdsville and Oodnadatta Tracks, and over the borders into the Northern Territory; connecting the region of New South Wales west of the Darling River with southern and western Queensland. (p. xi)

Rajkowski sees the coming of Indian and Afghan cameleers to Australia as a 'movement of one group of colonists to another colony within the one great empire, the British Empire' (p. 1). The word 'Afghan' or 'Ghan' was given as a title to these cameleers to differentiate between the two groups of Indian migrants—one working on camel strings in the desert region and the other working on coastal plantations and farms. She notes that the 'work done by the Afghans and their camels (...) was commemorated by the naming of certain improvements and paddocks after them' (p. 33). The book is a lucid account of the contribution of the Afghan and Indian camelmens to the 'economic development and indeed survival of many of the outback settlements' of Australia. It is 'a tribute to their efforts and a record of their lives and achievements' (p. 184).

Purushottama Bilimoria and Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase's *Indians in Victoria (Australia): A Historical, Social and Demographic Profile of Indian Immigrants* is a pioneering monograph published on the Indian community, contributing in a significant way to furthering an understanding of the intricate features that characterize the Indian community that has settled in Victoria (Australia). While the study is extremely interesting, both authors are aware of its limitations in the absence of insufficient historical, social, and demographic information on the Indian community. The basic concern of this study is to collect relevant information and detail with respect to the pattern of settlement, adaptability, linguistic and cultural integration, educational and professional status, cultural orientation, and welfare issues. In this light, it can be counted among the best in the archive of documentation generated in the 1980s on ethnic minorities in Australia.

From India to Australia: A Brief History of Immigration; The Dismantling of the 'White Australia' Policy; Problems and Prospects of Assimilation as the name suggests is an historical account of Indian migration, white Australia policy and assimilation models employed in Australia. In his Introduction, the editor S. Chandrasekhar surveys the land, the mountains, the rivers, the fauna and the flora, the climate, and the weather along with the Aborigines, economy, Indian contract labour in Australia, and Immigration Restriction Act (1901). The book is a collection of well-conceived articles engaging with historical and political issues of Indian migration to Australia.

Vijaya Joshi's study *Indian Daughters Abroad: Growing Up in Australia* tells the 'stories of the real-life experience of marginal groups' particularly about the second generation. She writes that it was her own ethnic identity that prompted her to undertake this research, which through interviews with second-generation Indian women in Australia, assesses their status and lack of power within the diaspora and

Australia. The book ‘maps some of the socio-cultural themes which frame a second generation Indian woman’s life in Australia’ (p. 1), particularly studying the construction of gender roles within Indian culture. She concludes that for ‘the women, understanding their gender roles within their family and community were intertwined with their cultural role. They were not women within the Indian community, but *Indian* women’ (p. 202). So in her work South Asian diasporic woman becomes a location for traditions that others have abandoned.

Joyce Westrip’s and Peggy Holroyde’s *Colonial Cousins: A Surprising History of Connections between India and Australia* traces the real story of the links between India and Australia and presents through an Australian perspective an ‘Australian Tale’ of connections. According to the authors this is ‘a personal exploration into an Indian-Australian landscape, a subject largely ignored or overlooked by recorders of social history, novelists, and the media’ (p. 3). The authors use archival material and interviews with people all over Australia, who are linked in one way or other, to the two countries and ‘share their memoirs, diaries, and reminiscences of India experiences’ (Hayes 2010: p. IX). Westrip and Holroyde write that their ‘long quest for elusive connections’, fell into three sections:

1. that of affinities, conjectured and real, which we certainly, and others in their own way, could affirm. This became the bedrock of the text.
2. research into documented evidence long since absorbed into state archives or forgotten private memorabilia. Both of these provided a context and a framework of history for the third area.
3. the anecdotal, based in the taped reflections, the immediate linking of people, many still alive, who can trace memories back through several generations, or who still travel between India and Australia as their forebears did from the earliest days of settlement. This was the oral history (p. 7).

This book ‘traverses a period of history involving the movement of Anglo-Indians from India to Australia and is the first time anyone has recorded such a comprehensive social history covering one group migrating from India to Australia over two centuries’ (Hayes 2010: p. XI). *Colonial Cousins* is the story of India and Australia, not of the British Raj. It is ‘another story’—‘a real down-to-earth Australian version of experience in and with India from the very first days of settlement by the white British’ (p. 1). The authors note that the connections between Australia and India were quite different from that between Britain and India, as ‘India and Australia often suffered together under the watchful paternalism and maternalism in the latter part of Victoria’s reign, of the mother country’ (p. 1). The book not only traces the human links but also geological, anthropological, architectural, and mythological similarities between the island of Australia and subcontinental India. The authors are aware that the records referred to in this book are ‘incomplete or require further research’ but since this research has been funded privately such limitations are acceptable. Through their book, the authors ‘have managed to blend the unusual story of the “colonial cousins” in historical times with more recent developments in the India–Australia relationship in terms of trade

and business' (Hayes 2010: p. XI). Although Westrip and Holroyde, both over 85 years of age in the book, present their 'deep understanding and genuine love of India and Australia' (Hayes 2010: XII), their passion as Australians for the India subcontinent once again reminds us of the necessity of more researches based on the same format by younger researchers who have professional backing and proper resources. (p. 8)

Some ethnic migrant communities in regional Australia have been the focus for relatively constant studies by anthropologists. In White Australia, 'Sikh' and 'Punjabi' were almost synonymous words. Marie De Lepervanche in *Indians in a White Australia: An Account of Race, Class and Indian Immigration to Eastern Australia* embarks upon an anthropological fieldwork journey. Her study of the Punjabi community of Woolgoolga, undertaken in the 1970s, provided the basis for understanding how the white Australian ideologies, policies, and practices affected the community. Through her interaction with the Punjabi community in the villages, she recorded the fascinating story of their community development, successful establishment of the Punjabi settlers whose banana farming and cane-cutting jobs provided the source of income. The connections between these pioneer settlers with their home villages, and their arranged marriage alliances with partners from India are also examined. She notes that this continuing contact with their culture and customs also provided a secure foundation for their adjustment to different social and cultural attitudes in Australia. De Lepervanche's doctoral fieldwork was also among Punjabi Indian settlers on the New South Wales North Coast, an enterprise that entailed a critical inquiry into the interrelation of race, ethnicity, and class in Australian society.

Purushottama Bilimoria's *The Hindus and Sikhs in Australia* is a part of the *Community Profile* series instituted by the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research. The main aim of the series is to provide a perspective on the Australian population through a description of the religious communities with which the people identify. The profiles tell a story of immigration and settlement. This book is a detailed account and examination of the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus and Sikhs in Australia. Some of the possibilities and challenges that Hindus and Sikhs face living in Australia's multicultural society are noted, the documentation of which will hopefully permit a better climate for engagement between the host populations and the newer immigrants. Bilimoria concludes that 'Hindus and Sikhs, like all South Asians in Australia, have endured many hardships, and experienced prejudices on account of their colour or religious background' but they have 'preserved despite social and cultural alienation (...)' (p. 73). To him in 'the broader context of mainstream Australian society, the Sikh *gurdwara* with its "Word as God", and the moon-domes of the Hindu temple with its myriad of gods, symbolize in their different ways the struggle of maintaining distinctive communities within a decidedly multicultural and ethnically plural environment' (p. 74).

R.S. Gabbi's *Sikhs in Australia* is dedicated to the 'Pioneer Sikhs in Australia who did not lose their heart under discriminating and unbearable conditions and gave the footings to the present Sikh community in Australia' (p. 3). It is a brief but reliable history of Sikhs in Australia and shows Gabbi's knowledge of Sikhism and community life. His work differs from others as he exclusively chooses Sikhs, while

most of the earlier works focused more on Hindus. The book helps us understand the contribution the Sikhs have made in the development of Australia while working under unbearable conditions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Gabbi,

Sikhs had a very distinctive life in the late 19th and the early part of 20th century. They were not willing to assimilate or even integrate with Europeans but European children were always happy to play with them. Most of the Sikhs were single as very few could bring their wives into Australia or get married to Aborigines or European women (...). (p. 110)

Gabbi's book also contains a plea to present generations of Sikhs to 'set up such an image of a Sikh so that coming generations feel proud to be a Sikh and Australians will hold them in high esteem' (p. 189). In his conclusion Gabbi, to join others in the task of related research on Sikhs in Australia, suggests to all Sikhs to 'see directories under "SINGH" when they pass through or visit any town or city of Australia and try to establish a branch of "Australian Sikhs Historical Society" in each state with an Australian-based headquarters. For a long time to come, such information will become an authentic reference and a source of positive thinking about the place of Sikhs in Australia's past, present and future' (p. 189).

A Punjabi Sikh Community in Australia: From Indian Sojourners to Australian Citizens, edited by Rashmere Bhatti (co-ordinator and community settlement services officer at the WNC) and Verne A. Dusenbery (a scholar of Sikh communities in multicultural societies outside of India) was developed as a project²³ over a number of years in response to local, national, and international curiosity about the Punjabi Sikh community in the Woolgoolga-Coffs Harbour area and how they came to be established on the north coast of New South Wales. Bhatti writes about her own experience in the community: 'As an Australian-born Punjabi Sikh, I value the unique experiences that I have had with both Punjabis and non-Punjabis, at both a professional and personal level, in this community. My being bicultural—at home in both worlds—is what has made this project possible' (Preface).

The Punjabi Sikhs in Australia today are highly diverse in terms of their migration biographies, their cultural and social lives, their economic activities, and their transnational kinship ties. This book is a 'a portrait of a Punjabi Sikh community having weathered the era of the White Australia Policy and coming to terms with evolving Australian multiculturalism' (Preface). The story of how Sikhs, as Indians (a restricted race), entered and ultimately settled in a white Australia is unique. According to Bhatti and Dusenbery, it came about as a result of the political, social, and economic changes taking place in both Australia and India and because of the link these two countries had as members of the British Empire. Importantly, the Punjabi Sikh community's settlement reflects this country's growth from a white Australia to a nation embracing Australian Multiculturalism as an ideology. The book also analyzes the roots that Punjabis have planted in Australia and how they have managed to retain many aspects of their traditional culture and

²³ Available online at <http://www.apnaorg.com/books/sikhs-in-australia/>.

religion, the establishment of *gurdwaras*, arranged marriages, retaining of property or ancestral land, maintaining close contacts with relatives in Punjab, community (ethnic) newspapers and radio programmes, and associations to celebrate festivals and other Punjabi recreational activities in Australia. The prominent contributors to this study—W.H. McLeod, Marie M. de Lepervanche, Carmen Voigt-Graf, Verne A. Dusenbery, and Ramindar Singh—through their anthropological field-work and sociological studies of the community feel that the times ahead bode well for a community as promising as the Punjabi Sikhs with impressive achievements, both in religion and in the world. This book is an interesting collaborative undertaking that not only provides considerable background information on Sikhs and white Australia ideologies, policies, and practices that affected the community in Australia but also opens up new issues of research related to gender and generation studies. The framework and methodology used in this project also inspires young scholars to research more on South Asian migrant communities and tell their stories.

Tania De Jong writes that she embarked on her study, *Complexities of the Sri Lankan Migrants in Australia*, ‘as a hobby’ and because of her ‘strong interest in migration’ (pp. ii–iii). Her study concentrates, she writes in her Introduction, on a set of human relations that are directly linked with the process of migration. She argues that this process is a particular significant component of the wider processes of social change and modernization. Her analysis of Sri Lankan migrants in Australia, according to her, ‘proceeds diachronically, trying to understand human reality and relationships through the long journey which brought them to this current situation’ (p. vi). She also surveys the condition of Sri Lankan migrants during the 1980s Australia. However, she feels that her synchronic analysis of the Sri Lankan community is severely restricted by the lack of sociological analyses, studies, data, and statistics on Sri Lankan-Australians. Hence, her study is to a great extent result of her own ‘participation, observation, curiosity, and questioning of those complexities Lankans face in Australian society (...)’ (p. vii). She analyzes Sri Lankan reactions within the Australian society in the socio-historical context of 1950–1982. She discusses Sri Lankan migration history to Australia and Australia’s immigration policies and does a brief historical overview of culture and population. But her main focus in this short study is on Sri Lankan migrant complexities and processes of absorption, integration, and assimilation (p. 82). She concludes her study with a question: ‘Whether they (Sri Lankans) will be recognized as a national and cultural entity, within the context of multiculturalism for all Australians, remains to be seen’ (p. 83). Though the entire study is only a hundred pages long, but the depth of knowledge about the issues it covers and its anthropological approach are both quite fascinating.

In *Links Between Sri Lanka and Australia*, W.S. Weerasooria, a prominent lawyer, civil servant, diplomat, an academic, and former Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia and New Zealand, notes that the Australian Aborigines probably originated in South India from where they made their way to Australia via Ceylon, Malaya, and Indonesia. This argument thus makes the Veddas, the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka, a possible connection in the migration chain. His book is

based on previous researches in collaboration with the researchers who have done major and minor researches on the community at various Australian universities. Writing (or compiling) this book on Sri Lankan migration to Australia, in Weerasooria's words, was 'a voyage of discovery' (p. 42).

Rodney Ferdinands' *Proud and Prejudiced* tells the story of the Burghers before the mass migration, their exodus to new countries after the war, and their experiences of assimilation in Australia with the help of historical records, interviews, recollections, and anecdotes. Both a sociological history as well as a personal account into the heritage of a group hitherto minoritized into a larger 'Sri Lankan' history and nomenclature, the book is full of hope for the descendants of Burghers who chose Australia as their new home. With English as their first language and their dedication to assimilate, their adaptation to Australian ways of life was considerably easier than the rest of the Sri Lankan migrants (particularly from non-English backgrounds). According to Ferdinands, 'Burghers do not think of themselves as on the margins of Australian society. They do not see themselves, in the political sense, as Sri Lankans. They have assimilated into mainstream (Australian) society. Politically conscious Burghers are already active in the wider community' (p. 262).

The migration of Muslims to Australia also forms the subject of a number of studies. The Muslim strength in Australia is an issue of debate, as there is no separate census data on Muslims and the diverse groups (belonging to different nationalities) within it. Bilal Cleland's study *The Muslims in Australia* tries to provide an account of progress of Islam in Australia. His story of Islam's journey in Australia starts long before the white settlement, stretching back to traders from Macassar with links to Aborigines in northern Australia. Cleland not only outlines the achievements of Australian Muslims but also reveals the problems that they have faced—from community misconceptions to divisions in their own rank. He writes of the 'despised men' (p. 1)—Afghan and Indian Muslim cameleers and hawkers. But later observes that 'Indian Muslims were not discriminated against (in Australia) on religious grounds during the course of the war (World War I)' (p. 52).

Hanifa Deen, a third-generation Australian of Pakistani-Muslim ancestry, an active Australian human rights activist, and a social commentator, in her prize-winning book *Caravanserai: Journey among Australian Muslims*, portrays the lives of Muslims in Australia. Its title, *Caravanserai*, refers to the central court of an inn where caravans pull in for the night. Caravans, or covered wagons, were the mobile homes of many Muslims who later came to Australia to make a living by hawking goods. She observes

Caravanserai were not the place to maintain a social distance; travellers from different lands did not keep one another at arm's length. Everyone gathered together, sharing, exchanging, enjoying one another's company—unless you happened to be a blood enemy; though even then you enjoyed sanctuary in the caravanserai. (p. viii)

Deen further challenges the misleading stereotypes—images of veiled women, fierce bearded men, barbaric parents, rapists, and suicide bombers—that the Western media has spread. She notes that 'Muslims are highlighted as a "problem"

with little in common with other Australians' (p. vii). Deen through her sensitive narrative provides 'Muslims a human face' (p. vii) and shows them as ordinary people who have their own little problems like everybody else, who have a mortgage to pay; who like sports and watching rugby matches; who worry about gaining weight; who send their children to school; who pay tax; who vote. She says that her book is not 'religious' or 'academic' or '*Who's Who* of the Muslim world in Australia' (p. vii). She concludes that there is 'enormous diversity among Australian Muslims' (p. 215) and with education and knowledge 'Young Muslims in the twenty-first century will be better equipped in terms of confidence and skills to reduce the social distance which exists between them and non-Muslims' (p. 217). Although in the second edition of her book published in 2003 after 9/11 attacks and Bali bombings of 2002, when she revisited the Muslim people she originally interviewed in Australia to discover how recent international events have affected their daily lives, she notes that Australia has shifted from the welcoming caravanserai that she had originally envisaged to a place that many Australian Muslims no longer see as safe for their families. Her book is a valuable contribution to the long and rich history of the books on Muslims and Australian life.

Kay Rasool's *My Journey Behind the Veil: Conversations with Muslim Women* draws upon the lives of women in Australia, India, and Pakistan and provides portraits of Muslim women from diverse backgrounds. The book is based on her documentary *My Journey, My Islam*, made for ABC TV. It explores the relevance of the veil in a modern world and the stories of the women who wear it. She says, 'My task is to give a human face to women who wear the veil, especially those who live in a Western society, and are not compelled in any way to cover their heads' (p. xiv). Thus, she is able to uncover a range of often opposing perspectives to personal belief and dispel stereotypes. The book will be a success according to Rasool 'if my readers can look at a covered head without surprise or wonder, as just part of the normal landscape of a multicultural society' (p. xv).

The dissertations submitted in the field of sociology outnumber the literary ones. Pandula Endagama's study "Sri Lankan Material Culture in North-East Queensland: A Study of Acculturation" (1981) submitted at James Cook University; Sisiri Kumara Pinnawala's Ph.D. thesis "Sri Lankans in Melbourne: Factors Influencing Patterns of Ethnicity" (1984) submitted at Australian National University; Rosita Joan Henry's Ph.D. thesis "A Tulip in Lotus Land: The Rise and Decline of Dutch Burgher Ethnicity in Sri Lanka" (1986) submitted at Australian National University; Adrian Gilbert's Ph.D. thesis "The Anglo-Indians in Australia: From Unsuccessful Caste Members to Attaining Immigrants" (1996) submitted at Monash University; Basundhara Dhungel's dissertation titled "A Study of Nepalese Families' Paid and Unpaid Work after Migration to Australia" (2000) submitted at The University of Sydney; Bianca M. Fijac and Christopher C. Sonn's research on "Pakistani-Muslim Immigrant Women in Western Australia: Perceptions of Identity and Community" (2004) submitted at Edith Cowan University; and Michiel Baas' Ph.D. thesis titled "Imagined Mobility: Migration and Transnationalism among Indian Students in Australia" (2009) submitted at University of Amsterdam.

Pandula Endagama's study, "Sri Lankan Material Culture in North-East Queensland: A Study of Acculturation", focuses on Sri Lankans who immigrated to Australia after 1948 and also on some of the descendants of early pioneer migrant who came on the ship *Devonshire* in 1882. The primary objective of his study is to identify and analyse what these Sri Lankan immigrants had retained of their original ethnic culture and the ways in which the links with the homeland were maintained, which he does by way of a fascinating examination of a catalogue of personal possessions that the Sri Lankan migrants brought over, such as furniture, household items, dresses, objects of religious or caste significance, musical instruments, native plants, and the like.

Sisiri Kumara Pinnawala's Ph.D. thesis "Sri Lankans in Melbourne: Factors Influencing Patterns of Ethnicity" is one of the most comprehensive researches on Sri Lankan migrants. He notes that some Sri Lankan immigrants, in the Australian context, prefer their ethnic identity, for example Sinhalese-, Tamil- or Burgher-Australian. He notes that most of the Sri Lankans who have settled since 1950s in Melbourne belong to the middle-class. His study of the Melbourne Sri Lankans is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, fieldwork, interviews and questionnaires, and discussions with officials of different clubs and associations and community leaders. His division of the Sri Lankan migrants into three sociological categories or groups, namely Ethnic Assimilationists (Burghers), Ethnic Intergrationists (Sinhalese and Tamil Christians), and Ethnic Traditionalists (Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus), is quite interesting in the way Sri Lankan Diaspora sees itself in Australia.

Rosita Joan Henry in her Ph.D. thesis "A Tulip in Lotus Land: The Rise and Decline of Dutch Burgher Ethnicity in Sri Lanka" considers the historical processes and human agency involved in the creation of a particular identity category, the Dutch Burghers of Sri Lanka, their rise and fall. She does so by reflecting upon Karl Marx's maxim that 'People make their own histories, but not just as they please'. Her thesis, like her other studies on the same theme, is homage to the Dutch Burgher migrants and their life experiences.

Basundhara Dhungel's dissertation "A Study of Nepalese Families' Paid and Unpaid Work after Migration to Australia" is a case study of 28 couple families, who migrated from Nepal under 'skill' or 'professional' category. Dhungel observes that the patterns of paid and unpaid work adopted by migrant families with dependent children are more or less similar to that of prevailing working pattern of men and women of Australian-born couples (whites). The only factor that differentiates working pattern of migrant families with Australian-born families (whites) is the experience of migration and their categorization as migrants. One of the important experiences of migrant families is that there are new opportunities, new lifestyles, new intimacy and companionship, and new sharing of work between husbands and wives after migration. At the same time, there are losses of extended family relatives, close friends, and cultural events, which affect their day to day lives. However, there are Australian-based friends who provided support in the initial period of migration but these families do not provide regular assistance or support that family relatives provided in Nepal.

Bianca M. Fijac and Christopher C. Sonn's research paper entitled "Pakistani-Muslim Immigrant Women in Western Australia: Perceptions of Identity and Community" explores the perceptions and experiences of impacting identity and community for Pakistani-Muslim immigrant women living Western Australia. Ten Pakistani-Muslim immigrant women, aged 40–50 years, who immigrated to Australia in the 1970s, were interviewed about their perceptions and experiences of their community. The findings indicated that the role of religion was a core component in the experience of community and the settlement process. Racism and exclusion, social support structures, and gender roles were other factors impacting the development and maintenance of the identity and community of this group.

Adrian Gilbert's Ph.D. thesis "The Anglo-Indians in Australia: From Unsuccessful Caste Members to Attaining Immigrants" analyzed the successful settlement and progress of Australian Anglo Indians. One of his most interesting findings is that Anglo Indians in Australia are doing better in both fact and perception than in Britain or, indeed, in India. Gilbert notes that the Anglo-Indians in Australia are doing better than people of Australian descent, although there are some areas of concern, such as the under-representation of Anglo-Indians in management positions and the lower hourly earnings of Anglo-Indians with higher degrees. Gilbert's is one of the important studies of Anglo-Indians who settled in Australia (see also Assisi 2006).

Because of a recent increase in racist and/or opportunistic assaults and attacks ('curry-bashing') on Indian students in 2009, the issue of Indian students in Australia made headlines around the world. The incidents happened when Michiel Baas' thesis had already been completed and there was thus little he could do with this new development. His Ph.D. thesis, "Imagined Mobility: Migration and Transnationalism among Indian Students in Australia", a result of being involved in the topic of Indian (overseas) students for over five years, focuses on the case of Indian overseas students who go to Australia not just to study but also to migrate there. Baas notes that by the end of 2006, there were nearly 350,000 overseas students (including 38,700 Indian students) enrolled across all educational sectors in Australia, making the country one of the biggest players in the world of 'offering/selling education'. This number continued to grow and reached new heights by the end of 2008. Because of the recent race attacks on Indian students, this increase in numbers has declined a bit but Australia still remains a popular destination for overseas study. He argues in his thesis that 'imagination is crucial in understanding people's desire to be transnationally mobile. This goes not only for understanding why people decide to migrate but also how they experience the process of leaving one's country of origin behind and making their way into a new one' (p. 3). Central to this examination are the questions: how do Indians experience the process of migrating abroad, aiming for an Australian permanent residency (PR), while being overseas students at the same time? He explores these questions with three interrelated concepts: imagined mobility, arrival points, and in-betweenness. Adrian Bailey (2001) has argued that: 'key questions of migrant agency and hybridity remain under-theorized' (p. 413) in migration studies. Baas' thesis ultimately fills this lacuna by bringing in migrant's agency into a study on

migration and transnationalism. He examines the way Indian students experience the process they are undergoing (which for many is the underlying reason for having chosen Australia as a study-abroad destination) in light of the finding that studies of transnationalism pay little to no attention to the (individual) process of transnationalization itself (p. 10). His passion for the welfare of students, awareness of the ongoing events, and multiple dimensional possibilities for further research is reflected when he writes that 'I am still in active touch with many of the people who coloured my fieldwork I consider my research as ongoing, likely to yield more data in the years to come' (p. 11).

Literary Research

Very few studies have dealt with the subject—I have come across only a handful of literary researches on South Asian diaspora in Australia. This includes books such as *Celebrations: Fifty Years of Sri Lanka-Australia Interactions* (1997), *Celebrations!—Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Women in Canberra: Testimonies and Memories* (2008), Sissy Helff's *Unreliable Truths* (2013), and my edited collection: *Bridging Imaginations: South Asian Diaspora in Australia* (2013). Apart from my own M.Phil. dissertation, titled "Postcards from Trishankus: Images of India and Australia in South Asian-Australian Short Stories" (2006) and Ph.D. thesis, titled "Roots & Routes: Politics of Location in the Short Stories of South Asian Diaspora in Australia" (2010) submitted at Jawaharlal Nehru University, I have come across Glenn D'Cruz' Ph.D. thesis titled 'Representing' Anglo-Indians: A Genealogical Investigation" (1999) submitted at University of Melbourne, Sharmini Kannan's M. A. dissertation titled "Pappadums in Paradise?—Journeys of Indian Migrant Women to Australia" (2002) submitted at Deakin University, Mohit Manoj Prasad's Ph.D. thesis titled "Indo-Fijian Diasporic Bodies: Narratives in Text, Image, Popular Culture, and the Lived Everyday in Fiji and Liverpool, Sydney Australia" (2005) submitted at University of Western Sydney. Tamara Mabbott Athique's Ph.D. thesis on South Asian Diaspora literature in Australia titled "Textual Migrations: South Asian-Australian Fiction" (2006) submitted at University of Wollongong; and Pauline Lalthlamuanpii's MPhil dissertation "A Study of Women's Characters in Yasmine Gooneratne's Novels *A Change of Skies* and *The Pleasures of Conquest*" (2009), submitted at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Celebrations: Fifty Years of Sri Lanka-Australia Interactions, edited by Cynthia Vanden Driesen and I.H. Vanden Driesen, as the title suggests celebrates the contribution of Sri Lankans to Australia. This edited collection contains views on Sri Lankan diaspora and writers from Australia along with a few literary articles. This massive book of about 31 essays, biographical writing, fictional work, and poems was released to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Sri Lankan Independence. Sri Lankan migration has steadily increased since World War II. *Celebrations* feature issues and personalities of national and international importance, and the stories from the community that provide insights into a range of life

experiences. This book, intended for general readers (both Australians and Sri Lankans), is an informative and valuable contribution to an understanding of the Sri Lankan diaspora, its post-arrival experiences, success, problems, and hopes in Australia. Contribution to this collection ranges across fields as varied as the academia, law, business, and sciences. In most of the stories collected here, the writers recount the day when they decided to migrate to Australia. Writing in the Foreword to this tome, Alison Broinowski (1997) says:

They recall the date of their arrival, and the weather on that day. Being met by relatives, Sri Lankan or Australian friends, made the difference between feeling welcome and wishing they had not come. Small gestures of kindness from neighbours were worth much more than those who made them knew. (...) Some find a new vocation in working with other migrants, or with Aborigines. Others recognize some of the obstacles confronting them for what they are, protectionism, and they each find their own way to overcome them. (p. xvi)

This book makes an important contribution to multicultural Australia by showing us that ‘it exists not only in a policy but in people’s lives and the choices they make; (...) and the need for all of us to appreciate that diaspora involves coping with difference, indeed relishing it’ (Broinowski 1997: p. xvii). So the recurring note in this book is of celebration—‘celebration of Australia, their adopted land, for affording them the opportunity to reinvent themselves as it were and yet with this theme remains a nostalgic love and acknowledgement of the debt owed their original homeland, Sri Lanka’ (vanden Driesen and vanden Driesen: p. xxi).

Celebrations!—*Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Women in Canberra: Testimonies and Memories*, edited by Thishanka Karunaratna and compiled by Badra Kamal Karunaratna, of the Sinhala Cultural Association under a project funded through the 2006–2007 ACT Women’s Grants Program is an extraordinary collection of life stories presenting hopes, joys, and challenges of ordinary Sri Lankan-Australian women who have made their home in Canberra over the last two decades and as they establish themselves in a new country. Sri Lankans and Sinhalese make up a small but vibrant part of the ACT’s population. By compiling and publishing this massive collection, Karunaratna has put to history the extremely important contribution and experiences of women from South Asian cultural background—housewives, academics, social workers, journalists, and others.

Sissy Helff’s *Unreliable Truths: Transcultural Homeworlds in Indian Women’s Fiction of the Diaspora* explores migratory histories of homemaking in South Asian Diaspora and globalized world. Chapter 4, titled ‘Growing up in Transcultural Diasporic Worlds’, analyses Suneeta Peres Da Costa’s novel *Homework* (the only one for study in this book) as a novel of formation that charts a young person’s development through complex fictionalized experience. Helff notes that although South Asian-Australian diaspora writing is ‘still in its infancy, and there is little critical appraisal of it as yet’ (p. 112) but there are some promising new voices and talent, who are working towards creating an oeuvre and providing new perspectives on Australia through their stories.

My edited collection, *Bridging Imaginations: South Asian Diaspora in Australia*, containing essays that are both informative and theoretically astute from eminent scholars from diverse disciplinary standpoints, is considered a foundational volume dealing with cross-cultural themes in Australia. According to Vijay Mishra, in his endorsement, the ‘essays in the volume establish the parameters for any future study of the South Asian diasporic imaginary in Australia’ (Back cover). It is an exciting collection that serves as a timely reminder of the extraordinary historical depth of the presence of the South Asians in Australia. It covers conversations combined together with a broad range of academic material under a variety of approaches: historical, sociological, film, media, literature, and politics. This book provides a splendid overview of South Asian Diaspora’s way of living and covers varied topics of historic importance—from pioneering Indian coolies, hawkers, and labourers in the Queensland sugar plantations to students, academicians, and other professionals in more recent times.

Glenn D’Cruz’s Ph.D. thesis titled ‘Representing’ Anglo-Indians: A Genealogical Investigation” examined Anglo-Indian representations in the social sciences, literature, and films. In “Beyond the Pale” (2004), he says that he began his research as an academic to seek a better understanding and ‘discover the historical and cultural factors’ that shaped his Anglo-Indian identity in Australia (p. 226). Using the postcolonial theories of Bhabha, Spivak, and Said as an ‘insight’, he writes that his research helped him to

come to terms with my cultural identity, it helped me to answer some questions about my family’s odd quirks that had long perplexed me. In some instances these often personal eccentricities resonate with history in curious ways. (2004: p. 227)

He observed in his thesis that the social sciences continue to construct the Anglo-Indian as ‘a rather pathetic figure’ on the ‘margins of legitimate society’. He writes that

Anglo-Indians are the smallest, and possibly, minority group in India. They are the literal progeny of European colonization, and are often stereotyped as being ‘more British than the British’ because they practise Christianity, speak English as their first language and generally adopt British social customs. (2004: p. 223)

The result being, most frequent representation of the Anglo-Indian male as a social and cultural misfit, like a ‘marginal man’ whose problems exist because of ‘an unrealistic self-image’. During the course of his research, he discovered that Anglo-Indians in British India had the reputation of being the best clerks—‘a natural vocation for Anglo-Indians’ (2004: p. 227). So, to him

It was, therefore, gratifying to recognise that in writing my Ph.D. thesis I finally became a clerk of sorts. I sifted through fragments, organizing a mass of haphazard documents and records. The archival records told me quite a bit about Anglo-Indians, satisfying my inner clerk, but it was the critical analysis of personal artefacts I uncovered during the course of my research that I found most compelling, and most helpful in putting my life and my sense of subjectivity into context. (2004: p. 228)

With the help of archival material, he contested the ‘various deprecatory stereotypes of Anglo-Indians that circulated in the literary and social-scientific

texts' (2004: p. 228). Rather than simply dismissing the representation of Anglo-Indians in literary texts as offensive stereotypes, D'Cruz identifies the conditions for the emergence of these stereotypes through close readings of writers such as Rudyard Kipling, Maud Diver, John Masters, and Salman Rushdie and key works such as *Bhowani Junction* and *Midnight's Children*. As far as the representation in films and literature is concerned he explains that Anglo-Indians were often presented 'as feeble biological specimens prone to lax morality, melancholia, and a wide variety of vices that led to poverty' (2004: p. 228). His thesis is the first detailed study of Anglo-Indian representations in literature and films. Glenn D'Cruz now finds value in things like *Cotton Mary* and *Bhowani Junction*—'Not necessarily because they are good films, but because they are like rare texts which deal with Anglo-Indian culture, Anglo-Indian themes' (see Assisi 2006). His thesis presenting a persuasive argument against 'image criticism' underscores the importance of contextualizing literary texts and makes a timely contribution to debates about the representation of Anglo-Indian diaspora, 'mixed race' identities, minority literature, and Australian Multiculturalism.

Mohit Manoj Prasad's Ph.D. thesis, "Indo-Fijian Diasporic Bodies: Narratives in Text, Image, Popular Culture, and the Lived Everyday in Fiji and Liverpool, Sydney Australia", examines 'modalities of identity and representation for the Indo-Fijian diaspora and its second shift diasporic remove in Liverpool, Sydney, Australia'. He also examines the 'Indo-Fijian Literature in English, Fiji-Hindi, Memoir form of Indo-Fijian diasporic writings along with representations of Indo-Fijians in other texts' to 'enable siting of various identities and representations' (p. 2). The Indo-Fijian diasporic identity and its representation is the core concern for this thesis in its manifestations in the literature, memoirs, and narratives on the diaspora, tourist ephemera, popular culture, and the everyday (p. 1). His arguments are well placed and theoretically sound for examining alternative practices of reading the Indo-Fijian diaspora, literature, and narratives about it, and their particular production, expression, and consumption of popular culture. His thesis not only helps us in understanding the politics of the retrieval of performative identities but also expands current research and scholarship on Indo-Fijian-Australian diasporic identity and representation.

My Ph.D. thesis titled "Roots and Routes: Politics of Location in the Short Stories of South Asian Diaspora in Australia" raises the central questions of the concept of 'roots' and 'routes'—'rooting into a culture' and 'routing out of a culture'—of South Asian-Australian diaspora which constitute their 'politics of location'. The nature of this study is interdisciplinary because although it is primarily an analysis of short stories produced by South Asian diaspora writers in Australia, it depends heavily on data from sociological, anthropological, and historical studies as secondary sources. The thesis argues that the narratives of South Asian diaspora writers produced from Australia deserves a special status in analyses of the social-cultural-economical-historical 'narratives' produced by the South Asian Diaspora around the world. It further argues that a clearer notion of politics of location will be required to distinguish the different kinds of 'dislocation' the immigrants suffer psychologically and sociologically because literature acts as an

instrument for the deployment of these often ‘complex discursive strategies’. The study pointed out that the authors explore the processes of displacement and dislocation of identities through migration, journey, settlement, and nostalgic returns and their character’s struggle to negotiate locations within Australia. In turn, these migratory experiences have created diasporic locations—of nostalgia, spatial identity, gender, family, and class—that need to be read and explored in one interpretative framework, that is, politics of location that helps in examining the position of the migrant as a subject influenced by political, economic, cultural structures, and processes in his/her environment thus affirming a community’s genuine right to self-identification.

My M.Phil. dissertation “Postcards from Trishankus: Images of India and Australia in South Asian-Australian Short Stories” is a selective reading of a gamut of stories, born out of the experiences of two worlds and cultures, produced by the South Asian diaspora writers in Australia and published in various journals, anthologies, and collections. Divided into two groups: the first group (titled ‘Looking Back: Imagining Home’) containing those short stories that look at the homeland or present an image of India and the second group (titled ‘Present and Future: Imagining Australia’) looking at the hostland or present an image of Australia, raised certain pertinent questions and relevant issues such as How important is physical location for an individual? How do these Trishankus construct or imagine the past for future’s sake? How do they reread their own country (homeland), now that they have left it and has the image of India changed in these works? How does the immigrant look at India in relation to Australia? Are these immigrants at a privileged position or is their status as ‘Trishankus’ a source of an irresolvable dilemma in relation to identity markers? It also argued that these short stories by South Asian-Australians have in some ways helped to situate the Australian short fiction in the world literature today by forming international literary links, which are needed by any literary culture to be considered successful and worth critical attention. The short stories under analysis presented the themes of emotional alienation, self-identity, cultural expectations, cultural displacement, and representation of difference, and so on, and also displayed a uniform thread of sensibility in taking up issues that remain the same in spite of the difference in the migration points, that is, the point of arrival of these writers from the Indian subcontinent. A significant number of the stories analyzed here are by and about women who migrated to Australia, in some cases with their husbands and in some cases alone to pursue and see their dreams become reality. These women writers have in a very strong way contributed towards the ‘powerful literary contribution’ of women writing in ‘contemporary Australian culture’ as well as that of the pioneering immigrant male who have been till now projected as shouldering the responsibility of contributing towards the making of their homes and Australia. In conclusion, I observed that the South Asian immigrants present a gaze that analyzes what happened to the protagonists/characters before they arrived in Australia or the motives of as to why they arrived in Australia leaving behind their homeland. In a sense, these immigrants never cease their efforts to reveal and construe the past.

Given the growing recognition of multicultural and Asian-Australian literatures, the study of South Asian-Australian cultural production now requires attention. Tamara Mabbott Athique's thesis on South Asian Diaspora literature in Australia titled "Textual Migrations: South Asian-Australian Fiction" responds to the gaps in the scholarship of minority literatures and makes a new contribution to diversifying the field of diaspora criticism. Athique examines the tactics employed in and around selected works of fiction—a set of 15 texts by Christopher Cyrill, Suneeta Peres Da Costa, Christine Mangala, Bem Le Hunte, Michelle De Kretser, Chandani Lokuge, Chitra Fernando, Ernest MacIntyre, Brij V. Lal, Sudesh Mishra, and Satendra Nandan. Her thesis also considers the productive limits and limitations of literary categorization. To consider the narrative detail of South Asian-Australian fiction, she looks into a set of questions: what types of stories do South Asian-Australian writers choose to tell and how do they craft them? And what are the effects of such narratives and how are their complex cultural locations conveyed? Through detailed textual and conceptual analyses from postcolonial studies, theories of diaspora, and critical multiculturalism, Athique argues for an integrated theoretical approach to a set of texts that operate across local, national, and transnational literary contexts.

Sharmini Kannan's dissertation "Pappadums in Paradise?" on Indian migrant women in Australia is a work of creative nonfiction with real characters. Her dissertation has 'its genesis in the stories of eleven migrant women who now live in Australia' (p. 7). She notes in her Prologue that the 'blue glass is always the hardest to find' (p. 1) and her search for Indian migrant women is like a 'quest for the blue glass. It was not an easy task. It became a process of rummaging through other people's lives, searching for fragments and relics. Eventually I was able to fit pieces together to form a mosaic of their lives in that other time, that other place. And also in this present time, in this place they now call home, Australia' (p. 2). Her dissertation is a record of conversations, narratives, debates, songs, questions, and answers. Her study emphasizes 'the geographical and psychological borders and boundaries crossed in the process of migration' (p. 8). 'Pappadums' in the title is used as a metaphor for Indian women and suggests the ways in which a word from English 'can be spelt in any number of ways'—Pappadums, Pappadams, Pappadoms, and Puppodoms—and 'how different cultures have influenced the borrowed spelling of a foreign word' (p. 11). It is lucidly written in the short stories format and 'is a narrative about narratives' (p. 12). It is 'an exploration of stories and histories that recover the losses one is subjected to in migration and displacement' (p. 12). Her dissertation explores a process of transformation that is both enriching and challenging.

Pauline Lalthlamuanpii's MPhil dissertation "A Study of Women's Characters in Yasmine Gooneratne's Novels *A Change of Skies* and *The Pleasures of Conquest*" attempts to study three main issues in migrant writing by taking Yasmine Gooneratne's fictional work as a case study. First, it is a study of Gooneratne's concept of multiculturalism in the context of Sri Lanka and Australia. By presenting multiculturalism from a woman's perspective, Lalthlamuanpii observes, Gooneratne beautifully merges the public and the private sphere. Thus, family as a unit becomes a space where issues of racial purity and multiculturalism are

negotiated. Gooneratne breaks away from stereotypes by showing multiculturalism as a space where women break away from traditional structures. Lalthlamuanpii further argues that Gooneratne is satirical when she portrays Australia as a multicultural utopian space. This sort of portrayal accentuates its flaws and weaknesses effectively. This awareness of its flaws shows Gooneratne's anxiety to create an alternate model for Sri Lanka. The problems in Sri Lanka made it impossible to talk about its multiculturalism in a positive light. Lalthlamuanpii is also able to establish the importance of Gooneratne in South Asian-Australian writing. According to her, Gooneratne's importance lies not only in how she has positioned herself as a Sri Lankan in Australia, but also in her stance as a woman migrant writer in Australia. So, unlike majority of first-generation migrant writers she does not confine her works to her ethnic community only. Her novels reflect a conscious attempt to move away from communalism to a more global outlook. In conclusion, Lalthlamuanpii sees the importance of Gooneratne in her conscious refusal to position herself as the 'Other'.

In spite of all the sociological, anthropological, and historical research to support literary studies, there are only nominal critical articles or dissertations on South Asian diasporic literature published in Australia and most themes remain under-explored, making the fate of South Asian diaspora writer suffer in the 'anxiety of invisibility' (V. Lal 2009). Literary studies have yet to see a full-length published study of South Asian diaspora writing. The larger picture in the literary area is one of lack, that is, critical material is limited to book reviews and articles that are published in various journals and conference proceedings or anthologized essays dealing with Australian literature. Pauline Lalthlamuanpii's dissertation on Yasmine Gooneratne's novels is a good beginning, along with Tamara Athique's thesis, thus breaking away literary research on South Asia from Asian-Australian writing.

Other notable authors such as Mena Abdullah, Chandani Lokugé, Adib Khan, Chitra Fernando, and Christopher Cyrill also deserve full-length studies and research. It is imperative to note here that Mena Abdullah and her short stories are crucial in the literary history of both South Asian diaspora writing and Australian literature. Annette Robyn Corkhill in *Australian Writing: Ethnic Writers 1945–1991* (1994) and *The Immigrant Experience in Australian Literature* (1995), and Bruce Bennett in *Australian Short Fiction: A History* (2002) have dedicated a section on Mena Abdullah, second-generation South Asian diaspora writer of Punjabi background. And according to Corkhill (1994), Abdullah's stories are

crucial in the literary history of our immigrant writing, for their enthusiastic reception hailed the advent of a new age of critical enlightenment. Abdullah's regional writing was significant not only for the profound cultural variance expressed, for the fact of female authorship, for the setting of the stories (a sheep farm in Australia's New England), but also, and perhaps most importantly of all, for the autobiographically based recording of life in a family whose religious tradition was alien to a monochrome society (the narrator's father was Muslim, her mother of Hindu origin). (p. 69)

Despite her crucial importance as the first major female author of South Asian origin, it is a pity that no full-length study on her life and works has ever been attempted. This is because, as Yasmine Gooneratne (1992a) notes,

Although Abdullah is one of the very few authors of Asian background who have achieved substantial publication in Australia, her finely crafted stories have not yet received the attention from Critics that they deserve. This is possibly because, although she is Australia-born, the experiences she writes about place her inevitably on the 'periphery', and beyond the line that has hitherto lovingly enclosed Australia's 'traditional' authors in an enclave that is deemed 'central' to the nation's literary and cultural development. (p. 115)

The literature I have surveyed above consciously provides new directions in the dynamic field of research on the South Asian diaspora in Australia and its social, cultural, political, economic, and literary participation in the Australian society. As a young researcher, one appreciates the work that must have gone into it. These books tell us the story of 'a tenacious, persistent people; who in all kinds of circumstances have endured and survived' (Tinker 1977: p. x).

It may be reiterated that the study of South Asian diaspora in Australia or any part of the globe is 'not a discipline by itself, but only an area of specialized study utilizing the data, concepts, methods, and theories of many disciplines' (Jayaram 2004: p. 33). The number of articles published in various journals and critical anthologies do cover, although nominally, as noted above, a wide range of South Asian-Australian socio-cultural and literary formations. These studies of South Asian diaspora in Australia is still a rich and impressive gathering. It is hoped that utilizing from the information and experience of previous research and data, more researches in the area of literary studies will emerge and present a dynamic community in transit.

Conclusion

The wide spectrum of writings that we see in Australian Literature today shows that it has come a long way from the days of Anglo-Celtic dominance to an era of a literary culture that is much more representative of Australia's migrant or multi-ethnic past and present. This has been made possible by multicultural writers asserting their own literary and cultural traditions in their work. These narratives/texts produced by authors belonging to diverse—both culturally and linguistically—ethnic backgrounds/communities have stimulated not only fascinating cultural dialogues but also a whole new area of critical perspective in diaspora and multicultural studies. In a certain special way, these writers and their writings have raised questions of redefining and reviewing the national canon. They have also tried to abolish categorizations and compartments of majority and minority literatures by making the mainstream accept their work as part and parcel of the truly 'Australian made' experience. However, the 'voices' of the early Indian subcontinental 'coolies' or pioneer migrants themselves, according to Marie de

Lepervanche (2007), an authority on migration from Indian subcontinent, are for the most part silent documents. She notes that the early South Asian migrants did not leave any journals, diaries, letters, memoirs, or autobiographies and their lives as pioneer immigrants in Australia were very hard, often lonely, and isolated. Yet, she asserts, their contribution to the economic success of Australia's early industries, particularly pastoralism, must be acknowledged (see pp. 99–116).

The South Asian diaspora in Australia is continually growing and flourishing as one of the most prosperous communities, with an ever-increasing role and responsibility in all areas of society—law, engineering, the medical profession, literature, performing arts (music, dance, art, theatre, and films), economics, philosophy, sociology, history, and other fields. David Carter (1997) has noted that 'literature is not just a set of individual texts or authors but rather a set of institutions and institutional practices which regulate the making and transmission of (literary) meanings in a given society' (p. 18).

In conclusion, Indian diaspora is supposed to have achieved success when its people are in Bollywood and national politics. Similar sentiments were recently expressed by Professor Amitabh Mattoo, Director of Australia India Institute at the University of Melbourne, in an interview to a community newspaper, *The Indian Sun*. Commenting on the role of Indian diaspora in national politics, he noted:

You know when a diaspora has come of age when it directly intervenes in the electoral process of a democratic county that hosts them. I think the fact that Indians are candidates in the forthcoming general election in Australia is health and reflects their mainstreaming and growing empowerment. ("Indian-origin Candidates ...", 2013)

A number of Bollywood films have been shot in Australia, and some Australian film makers have also used India as their location. India-origin actresses Maheep Sandhu Kapoor, Shubha Verma, Anusha Dandekar, Vimala Raman, Pallavi Sharda, and Japji Khaira have tried their luck and showcased their talent in Bollywood and regional cinemas of India. On the other hand, till now, South Asians in Australia were considered mostly politically silent or marginalized when it came to contributing to the electoral process (see also Kanth 2013).

Migrant communities have been slow to take their place at the table when it comes to politics. However, this election has proven to be a turning point. The Liberal Party was most generous with its seats for minority communities with six candidates. However, the Greens, Liberals, and even the Palmer United Party fielded candidates of Indian background (Kallivayalil 2013).

In the 2013 elections, it was strongly believed by political *pundits* that Australian citizens of South Asian origin, along with other migrant communities from Asia, will certainly play a critical role in the outcome. Twenty-six South Asian-origin candidates—Bhupinder Kumar Chhibber, Sam Swami Nathan, Gurminder Sekhon, Indra Esguerra, Ammar Khan, Dinesh Jayasuriya, Ganesh Loke, Mohandas Balasingham, Raheem Khan, Kalpesh Patel, Mohammad Ashraf, Alex Kaur Bhathal, Ali Khan, Jatinder Singh, Nihal Samara, Kim Mubarak, Balwinder Singh, Bikhar Singh Brar, Manoj Kumar, Jag Chuga, Shilpa Hegde, Vashil Sharma, Vimal

Sharma, Avtar Gill, Bill Gupta, Binoy Kampmark, and Suresh Rajan—representing various political parties, contested the 2013 election (see Dixit and Luthra 2013).

Although, given the newness of the idea, these candidates despite their major political backing and support from local communities did not stand a chance to win against political heavyweights. They were not even close to be called game changers as some people in the local South Asian community media thought of it, but their spirit to work for the larger Australian community and fight the elections can be seen as a new beginning for people of South Asian origin in Australia. Tanu Kallivayalil notes in her piece, ‘The Work has Begun’ (2013), in *The Indian Sun* magazine:

It is time for the community to withdraw and take a good look at how it can further its position within the various parties and make a more meaningful contribution to the political scene. It is truly a sign of successful integration if we are part and parcel of the political landscape of the country. One thing that we should keep in mind is that nothing is to be given for free, or to be taken for granted. We need to fight the good fight and learn how to do it right.

Participation of such a large number of candidates can be read as an acknowledgement of the South Asian presence in Australian political space and their ability to foster change in Australian society can only be nurtured by giving them key roles in national politics.

Finally, in the field of literature, all diaspora authors, wherever they are present, are our very own world travellers, who have set foot in every known region and society of the earth. And their journeys and experiences have generated bridges and influenced the historical, cultural, social, and academic perceptions of the ever-changing world society. Immigrants, who connect South Asia and Australia, are of special relevance to both the continents—especially to India, which has a centuries-old multicultural existence and continuous interaction/interconnection with its neighbouring (SAARC) countries combined with its plethora of languages, customs, discordant history, and religious and regional diversity. Thus, Australia, with its own rich and distinctive culture, provides space for the contribution of various successive immigrants and gives them political and economic stability.



<http://www.springer.com/978-981-10-3628-6>

South Asian Diaspora Narratives

Roots and Routes

Sarwal, A.

2017, XIII, 184 p. 1 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-3628-6