

# Book Reviews

## I

**Shompa Lahiri (2010) *Indian Mobilities in the West, 1900–1947: Gender, Performance, Embodiment*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, ix + 207 pp., ISBN: 978-0-230-61820-6**

When India was seen as a country that manifest deeply rooted patriarchal values in its tradition and culture, there was also another side of India where women despite of such symbolic patriarchal repression broke its barriers and travelled across the black waters. However such accounts of travel by Indians, especially Indian women are missing in the burgeoning scholarships of South Asian Diaspora, Geography and History. Shompa Lahiri in the book tries to catch certain accounts of men and especially women travellers who travelled across the 'West' (Britain, America, and Europe) during the 20th century and opens up questions on new perspectives on the connection between travel, embodiment, and racialized as well as gendered and classed identities. As Parama Roy argues that there is a huge range of work in mobilities and India Diaspora, however the feminist lenses from these works are heavily missing. Therefore Lahiri taking account into these criticism and drawing from feminist and post colonialist theories tries to pull out a coherent piece of work that would reflect not only on gendered accounts and histories of travel but also included neglected role of India women within mobility and cosmopolitan modernity.

All the five chapters of the book talks about case studies of South Asian women traveller who travelled across the sea in different time period of twentieth century with different visions may it be education or war, but managed to maintain similar patterns of phenomena like 'passing', 'gaze', and or 'sly docility'. The first chapter gives an account of 'Olive Christian Malvery' who was an Anglo-Indian by her ancestry and travelled to Britain in early 20th century. Here the author tries to see the possibilities of presenting 'nativeness' in imperial cosmopolitan London. Her 'nativeness' was reflected in varieties of ways. As for example one was her colonial Indian 'native' identity and other was as a poor flower selling Cockney girl as well as a society's lady. She was a journalist by profession where her

performance as a poor cockney girl tried to bring out the conditions of poor London into public attention. This chapter brings into light Malvery's many identities which she created through Masquerades, her acting skills and also her hybridity that was embodied through photography, mixed descent, skin colour, dress and voice. In her book *Soul Market* she talked of her ability to move not only cross borders but also through class 'up and down in the social ladder'. Thus Lahiri argues that on one hand Malvery was able to challenge the oriental notion of 'nativeness' by travelling out of the colony where as she reinforced her 'nativeness' in imperial Britain by staging herself as Cockney for a metropolitan audience to consume.

In the second chapter Shumpa Lahiri explores the themes of mobility, performance and domesticity through the comparative case studies of Dhan Gopal Mukherji and Parvati Athavale who both travelled from India within America in early twentieth century. Here she explores the relationship between 'Homing and Roaming' that is reflected in the autobiographies of these two travellers. The experiences and context of both the travellers were different because Mukherji being a male and a high caste Kulin Brahmin was definitely more privileged to be mobile than a widowed high caste Athavale at home. But both Athvale and Mukherji worked as servants in European household and institutions for their survival contradicting their high caste status and given gendered identities. Therefore juxtaposing their positions Lahiri asked what the concept of 'at home' in America might have meant to them.

The third chapter highlights how Indian colonial migrants changed their identities to avoid surveillance and to have access and into diverse imperial and national spaces of the West. It emphasised on how mobile masculinity, mimicry, performance and re embodiment were deployed in imperial zones. Lahiri here discusses cases of Indian nationalist and political criminals of British Satyandranath Chatrejee and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya(Chatto) who travelled various parts of Europe and British empire in disguise with agendas that were both national in 'ideology and transnational in operation'.

The fourth chapter talks about India women who travelled to Europe during mid twentieth century and were positioned both as 'mobile exhibits' and 'seeing subjects'. Using Fatimah Tobing Rony's concept of 'third eye' she tries to explain how Indian women travellers were taken as objects to be

observed as well as observers. Travellers like M.C.Kuttan Nair(1908-1997) also appropriated the concept of 'third eye', 'gaze', 'peep' in her writings while giving the description of Europe tour in 1934. Nair's accounts on travel reflects that she and her fellow women travellers were more subjected to 'gaze' during 1930s than those like famous Parsi social reformer Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, who was one of the first Indian women to receive a western education. Another important aspect highlighted by Lahiri is the concept of Photographic gaze. During 1930s the press used photographs of Indian women travellers as embodiment of European modernity. Finally Lahiri emphasizes on Nair's another concept 'walking zoo' which indicates the engagement of colonial anthropology to zoologise colonial subjects.

The fifth chapter gives tragic accounts of state sanctioned covert movement of secret agents during the World War II. This chapter through the case study of Anglo-Indian agent Noor-un-nisa Inayat Khan, author tries to emphasise how bodies, identity, mobility and performance creates meaning cutting across race, nationality and gendered notions of masculinity and femininity. This shows how Indian womanhood was reconstructed not just within the continent but also outside India. Khan as a female British agent in France not only claimed masculine nature of courage but also used masculinity as a tool.

The work on Indian mobilities in the west therefore opens up new horizons for transnational and diasporic studies. The noted feature about this work is that it shows how through mobility identities of gender, performance, and embodiment were created over space and time in diverse geographical and historical set up. The book has talked about mimicry and performance in almost all the chapters. For instance we can see in case of Malvey, Khan or Chatto how there were constant efforts to adapt another persona in order to hide the real persona and go undercover forming a complete different identity. This also identifies the importance stressed by Goffman, of actors changing their performance to suit different audience. The book is a product of good research and heavily draws from the archives and theories of disciplines like sociology, geography, history. It is appreciating that the author was able to trace back some valuable accounts such as photographs and police records from imperial government. However there are possibilities of more exploration. All the case studies cited here were of elite travellers from South Asia, whereas there is a lack of representation about the less privileged travellers who could be labours, soldiers, preacher

or pilgrims that might have travelled through various course of time. As for example noted Assamese writer and Padmashree awardee Indira Miri despite coming from a marginal lower caste background made her way to Edinburg University of Scotland on 6th April 1945. Moreover the book can also explore broadly on the relations of class, caste and gender and see how the interplay of these categories helps in identity formation both at India and in the West. India was known as a strict patriarchal country where mobility of women was highly constrained. Therefore it would also be interesting if the book tries to talk of the 'gaze' of common Indian public towards women travellers of twentieth century.

## Reference

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## II

**Ruvani Ranasinha (2016) Contemporary Diasporic South Asian Women's Fiction: Gender, Narration and Globalisation, London: Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 978-1-137-40305-6**

Ruvani Ranasinha's fourth book "Contemporary Diasporic South Asian Women's Fiction: Gender, Narration and Globalisation" published by Palgrave Macmillan is an addition to her oeuvre on South Asian Writers, except that, with this book she moves away from the South Asian writers in Britain to a broader area of contemporary South Asian women novelists and their post-colonial fiction. An extensively well researched book, inclusive of allusions, from a plethora of texts, forms the introduction along with all that has been written about the South Asian women, and diaspora writers. This book marks the shift in the trends in diasporic writing and deconstructs many a prejudice that mars the open reading of the contemporary diasporic writing. Whether it is the image of early diaspora writers or the prominent male writers, who steal the limelight, this book is a welcome change as it does not toe the line. Rather it creates its own niche by throwing light on

few contemporary diasporic women novelists from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India. It is a comprehensive analysis of the work of “this new constellation” of diasporic women fiction writers since the late 1990s. It comparatively analyses the work of Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Tahmima Anam, Monica Ali, Kamila Shamsie, and a few other writers from a feminist perspective. While talking about the scope of the book Ranasinha remarks that this book will prove how “the chosen writers decentre rather than re-inscribe the centrality of the West in their collective critiques of first- world models of feminism and emphasis on different varieties of feminism.”(7) The writer repeatedly questions the critics like Lau and Mendes for their opinion that South Asian Writers write from the periphery. Each chapter through its compelling analysis proves the “national and cultural contexts” which stations these writers in the centre and not the periphery. The writer argues again and again that these new diaspora women writers do not write under the influence of the colonisers or the critically acclaimed contemporary male writers. She emphasises that “the new constellation of diasporic South Asian anglophone women fiction writers” have broken the hegemony of the male writers. Furthermore, she argues that these writers are not “re-orientalists” as Lau and Mendes calls most of the South Asian writers and are not there to bask in the glory of “orientalism” but are there creating their own niche by their narration. These writers have integrated complex global issues in their works like globalisation, migration, post colonial feminism, cosmopolitanism, war, violence, religion and geographic space.

Beginning with the history of formation of South Asian diaspora community the book traces the milestones set by South Asian Anglophone women writers. With clear sections and subsections in the introduction, the first chapter intermingles key post colonial concepts with literary allusions from the works of the writers in question, and their predecessors. The multiplicity of culture is analysed with each chapter discussing important post colonial angle and followed by subsequent departures from the familiar conventional interpretations. It argues that similarity of social, political and economic conditions in their respective homeland, which is often mistaken as India by the West, brings these writers on a common platform and also gives them their distinct identities.

Tracing Arundhati Roy’s contribution, the book argues that Roy’s success inspired many writers from the subcontinent and analyses the work of

Monica Ali and Kiran Desai for many issues like migration, diaspora in the light of globalisation and labour. Apart from thematic analyses the book also compares the narrative techniques and realism in their works. In some instances it agrees and disagrees to the critics and presents its point strongly by highlighting the merit of these new writers.

The section on “War, Violence and Women” examines the writing of Anglophone Bangladesh writers like, Tahmima Anam and Sorayya Khan whose writing captures the Bangladesh liberation war followed by the subsequent creation of a new nation. It studies the forces of religion, gender, politics that became instrumental in leaving scarred memories of dislocation, homelessness in the diasporic writers’ minds. While reinvestigating history, the section seeks answers to the condition of women and family during war and struggle for independence. Analysing Tahmima Anam’s *A Golden Age* and Sorayya Khan’s *Noor*, that narrate stories, littered with historical references, the writer tries to rationalise the eschewed history and violence against women, meanwhile comparing Anam’s narratives of Bangladesh’s violent birth with Khan’s, the writer observes, “Khan is less interested than Anam in exploring the political causes of the 1971 war but instead focuses on the legacy of violence” (104). Along with Anam’s and Khan’s narratives, Sri Lankan resident and diaspora writers like Ameena Hussein, Roma Tearne, J. Arasanayagam are also included in the study to examine gendered abuse, female abduction or disappearance during Sri Lankan civil war. The analysis points that these writers “foreground intermingled South Asian histories in terms of both reconciliation and conflict”, and “the gender related violence in South Asian nation building.” In this comprehensive study of contemporary writers, the book draws many allusions and reference from the renowned writers like Roy and Rushdie. However, the impact of their writings on this new generation of diaspora writers is an expected area of study, but the repeated comparison and arguments like Anam’s or Khan’s portrayal of war’s “brutal effects more powerfully than Rushdie’s lyrical coda on 1971 war towards the end of his novel *Midnight’s Children*”; or “Anam and Khan fuse narrative of nations and family organically” (95) therefore their work in some aspects outshine canonised works, appears unconvincing and far-fetched.

For discussing the matrix of Gender and Islam, the book incorporates Kamila Shamsie’s *Broken Verses* and *Burnt Shadows*, A God in Every Stone; Tahmima Anam’s *The Golden Age* and its sequel *The Good Muslim*,

along with Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Ameena Hussien's *The Moon in the Water*. Their common concerns and "responses to faith and politicised, gendered, global Muslim identities" (131) are categorically examined by tracing the collapse of secularism in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It astutely brings out how globalisation and westernisation have defined or redefined the Muslim women's identity. Hence these writers "reconfigure gendered notions of Islam" (171) and stress the need for "an alternative framework to consider Muslim women beyond the totalising conceptual categories of both 'Islam' and 'feminism'" (171). The writer strongly negotiates these writings as secular feminist writings in context of the nexus between Euro-American secularism and representations of Muslims and gender in their writings.

Interestingly, Ranasinha devotes an entire chapter to the celebrated writer Jhumpa Lahiri, and analyses each of her work critically. The chapter systematically progresses by first taking into account the regular comparison made by the critics, of Lahiri's work with that of Bharati Mukherjee. However, the book argues that "Lahiri registers a vital shift from the perspective of archetypal migrant tales to migrancy as a more universal, multifaceted experience"(176). It further answers the allegation on Lahiri "having a limited focus on Indian culture"(178) and her writing "does not represent authentic India", further the "commodification of her fiction"(181) for the American benefit, which is just a narrow representation of immigrant experience. The writer argues that Lahiri's growth as a writer shows her inclusion of class and gender privileges along with the complexities of immigration. The chapter consistently argues that Lahiri's narratives, "convey how constructions of gender and national identities are being refigured within contemporary transnational contexts of immigration and globalisation"(184). In her bid to call for re-assessment of Lahiri's work, the writer successfully argues against some critical remarks and complicates some. While the chapter mostly focuses on the intergenerational migratory dynamics away from the homeland the end brings in "return 'home' with new found transnational perspectives" as analysed in Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* and Uzma Khan's *Trespassing* (227).

To analyse the pertinent topic of "Post Colonial Cities" the chapter explores the recreation Calcutta, Karachi, Peshwar and Dhaka along with other cities, in these post colonial texts. It analyses the dynamics of the post

colonial cities as spaces where tradition and modernity are negotiated. The essay discusses the shift in the perception of the cities as presented in the colonial times and as presented by this new generation of writers. It argues that writers like Tagore, Gandhi and Narayan saw ambivalence signified by the decline of traditional culture as well as modernity. Once again under the overbearing influence of Rushdie's depiction the new age diaspora writers are examined for their representation of urban spaces along with the diaspora urban memories. The book enlists that in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, Calcutta is analysed as a post colonial city with a number of marginalised voices. Calcutta comes alive with its colonial past and post colonial planning and Marxist sway. Kamila Shamsie's narratives create Karachi as a platform for feminist solidarity against the national Islamic rules imposed in 1980s. It is often described for its "unpredictable nature" and ethnic violence while the historic city of Peshawar's "depiction of colonial terror, violence and chaos on blood stained streets"(256) hints its "multilayered but neglected history"(254). Similarly, the essay states that Dhaka in Tahmima Anam's writings often presents the emotion or the turmoil in the life of the protagonist.

Thus, the essay argues that "All can be compared transhistorically as events that reconfigure a gendered experience of urban space."(235) The post colonial cities are places where identities constantly change, how migration disrupts traditional understandings of the geography of the cities. The essay also rejects the remark of the western critics who disapprovingly defined these cities for their, "overpopulation". In contrast these novelists "defy generalisation by probing the long histories, urban specificities and physical and cultural topographies"(238). The chapter ends with an important observation that none of these writers strengthen the duality of local and global rather they present a tension between them based on urban imaginaries.

Ruvani Ranasinha in her after word of this comprehensive book on the new age diaspora writers acknowledges the limited perspective with which the diaspora writers write, especially when they narrate stories of the homeland. She concludes by saying the resident women writers have explored the issues of class, caste, nationalism and gender oppression with greater understanding, thus limiting the scope of criticism of her study.

Hence this book by Ranasinha, encompasses almost all the angles that needs to be investigated in the contemporary diaspora literature based on the

subcontinent. In one book, she brings in the history, geography, language, gender, readership, text and context of the South Asian Diaspora and the effects of globalisation and migration on their literature. The key concepts like South Asia, Diaspora, post national, post colonial- cosmopolitanism, post colonial-feminism and globalisation are not taken for their face value; rather they are deconstructed, explicated and re-defined to convey the ideas with clarity and context. Thus, this is a compelling book, with informative comparative analyses that will be of immense use to students and scholars with interest in post colonial consideration of literature.

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### III

**Katharine Charsley (2017) Transnational Pakistani Marriages: Marrying 'Back Home', Newyork: Routledge, ISBN: 978-0-415-66066-2**

As studies on migration, Diaspora, citizenship are increasing in numbers, one trend that is mostly observed and hence has been the subject of numerous researches is the phenomenon of marrying back home; where many young people tend to get spouses from their ancestral land. While many researches on this subject have highlighted the strategic motivations for such acts; Katherine Charsley's book stands out as it engages in the notion of emotion encompassing such transnational marriages without narrowing the causes down to just power and strategy. In 'marrying back home', she observes this transnational marriage practice found among the Pakistani Diaspora residing in Bristol, Western England. This work is based on ethnographic research done in Pakistan Punjab and Bristol in two phases, 2000-01 and 2007-08.

The introduction of the book is highly enlightening. It provides a precise yet detailed history of the Pakistani migration to UK, while also highlighting many changes in the migration policies in both Pakistan and Europe, mainly UK. She then moves forward to provide a small background idea of the Bristol Pakistanis, throwing some light upon their heterogeneity in terms of class and urban-rural divide and demography. This chapter also entails her fieldwork experience and the problems she faced during the

time of her fieldwork. The first chapter brings forth various rituals involved in a Pakistani marriage. This, she writes based on her ethnography in Pakistan. The various rituals involved in a wedding like mehndi, nikah-namma, rukshati, walima, etc. She writes that wedding styles can also differ based on socio-economic status, participant's place of origin and also by technological advances. While she classifies wedding styles into- religious, traditional and modern; the reader gets confused as she hardly brings the distinction between religious and traditional to the front properly.

The second chapter offers a detailed review of transnationalism literature and tries to place this particular ethnography within the broader frame. Here, she highlights the difference in language and culture between the two places- Pakistan, Bristol which forces code-switching, behaviour that is suitable for a particular place. For instance, British Pakistanis have to wear particular kind of clothes, speak proper Urdu while in Pakistan while such behaviours aren't necessary in Bristol. Thus, they negotiate with their identities while in Pakistan. Similarly she also observes British Pakistanis children lack power and have little control over their lives while in Pakistan. Thus, she argues that both identity and power are negotiated transnationally.

Weddings, undoubtedly involve finding a proper spouse. In the third chapter, the author highlights this aspect through 'rishta'. Here, she argues rishta is not only proposal but it also means a match and sometimes, connection. Thus, the word rishta encompasses numerous meanings which vary according to the context. This chapter examines the desired characteristics of a life partner and how these partners are searched. A good rishta not only involves details about family background, educational levels, aspirations, etc but also involves emotional satisfaction and attraction. Hence, the author argues that spouse selection involves an inter-play of both strategy and emotions. Marriage, involves risk, the risk of being ill-treated. In chapter four, the author analyses the marriage preference of involved community through the perspective of risk. People prefer to marry their close kin even settled transnationally not because of strategic motivations regarding family assets but because such choices tone down the element of risk involved in marriages, reducing the risk of ill treatment of mainly young women as they are in the households of known kin. This idea of risk is furthered in the next chapter, which highlights a particular aspect of the British Pakistani marriage i.e. the gap between the nikah and

rukshati ritual. Rukshati implies the departure of the daughter and the consummation of marriage. Such an act is a strategy taken to minimise the risk, the author contends. Since transnational marriages involve legal pluralism, these tactics help British Pakistani women from many risks like polygamy, marriage for economic gain, etc. The use of accounts from the respondents in this particular chapter helps to understand such risks. the author notices that Islam uses the institution of 'mahr' as a way of protecting women in marriage; however based on her ethnography she could also document how such practices seem to be inadequate in real life.

While certain marriages are preferred for the addressing risks, sometimes marriage within a kin group (baradari) entails its own problems. Since the kin-group operates within ideas of honour (izzat, in the book); a failed marriage brings up clashes within the group highlighting the importance of honour. A powerful narrative by one of the respondents, Yashmin has been used by the author to highlight such complications in web of relationships in the sixth chapter. The failed marriage of Yashmin and her father's efforts in helping her daughter is seen as disrespectful thereby hampering the honour of the whole kin-group, for which they had to face many difficulties. This chapter has enabling explanations of the notion of honour and in the end provides thought provoking argument about the inter-play of emotions and honour, honour being invoked due to heightened emotional experience.

The next chapter is about the men that migrate to Bristol after marriage, often called as ghar-damad. The author in this chapter explores various issues that these men face like being in a new environment with little or no occupational skills, experience downward mobility, often face work-life conflicts and most important find their masculinity threatened. Having to leave his natal place after marriage goes against the patriarchal rules, the man or the 'imported husband' hence finds the gendered configuration upside down. Such men are often ridiculed at and seen as incapable of leading family life. Such experiences can be partly seen as the reason for failure of transnational marriages, the author argues. However not all 'imported men' experience such problems; there are few positive experiences as well. In the end of the chapter, the author again brings into light complex meanings involved in the notions of izzat. While often seen as honour, this chapter also sees it as personal morality. The last chapter represents the conclusion for the whole book. In a concise manner, this chapter shows how emotions are involved in transnational marriage and how it differs by gender. It finally

describes how her work balances the picture in an increasingly academic field that emphasizes strategic motivations for transnational marriage.

Charsley's work offers quality research into the areas of kinship, migration and transnationalism. Focusing on emotions provides a new twist to these studies. Her most commendable effort is not to see things as binary opposites, rather to perceive them as dynamics which are subject to change in different context, like rishta and izzat. The particular study can be seen as interlinking many aspects of sociology- kinship, sociology of emotions, power and control, gender, etc. This work emerges as a successful effort in highlighting the interpretive orientation of the social world. A comparative perspective about communities that don't prefer marriages within kin-group can further enrich research on emotions in mediating transnational marriages.

## References

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## IV

**Valeria Bello (2017) *International Migration and International Security: Why Prejudice Is a Global Security Threat*, New York: Routledge, \$142.50 |ISBN: 978-1-138-68946-6**

One of India's ancient scriptures, Maha Upanishad, sums up the very existence of human beings of various races, colours, ethnicity, nationality and religions by making them one composite family of the planet earth. It calls the inhabitants of the earth as one family Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. The Sanskrit shloka (couplet) says that people who consider this as mine, and that as others are narrow-minded people, whereas a broad-minded person considers all inhabitants of the earth as one family. I am tempted to quote this verse because while reading Valeria Bello's wonderful and thought provoking research, I was reminded of various common key words emanating from both the verse and the book under review. Consider for example, words like - Ours, Outsider, Conservative (prejudice), Liberals

and the fear of the “Outsider” (immigrants), which directly or indirectly find expression in the ancient text too. The underpinning thought of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, as a quest for universality, is so appealing that it is engraved at the entrance of Indian Parliament building.

Bello’s research could be seen in a similar light. The threat to our security is not from the terror per se, but from the prejudices held by people, the victims and the perpetrators alike. It is the prejudice that is the genesis of fear, anxiety and restlessness that has set in our global society. Prejudice is a negative emotion which breeds destructive thought process. As the author explains prejudice “concerns the sphere of those biased feelings and mental dispositions towards others that precede the real experience of facts. It is pre-judgment; a conclusion to which persons arrive before experiencing facts.” The very notion of prejudice is anathema to international peace and could well be equated with international insecurity.

To cover a larger canvas, as the subject is multi-layered and complex, the author has divided the book into three parts. The first part deals with the impact of international mobility, free-flow of capital, human and ideological transgression and the process of radicalization and terror attacks in various parts of the world. The second part is more explanatory and expounds some of the recent crisis including the Mediterranean crisis and the process of inclusion and exclusion and extremism as a result of trans-national migration and human and ideological dispersal. The final part, while explaining the malaise of the post-modern society delves into alternative remedies in the form of multicultural and intercultural dialogue and de-constructing the social fabric of terrorism.

Bello in her research, with great subtlety, establishes the correlation between the feeling of prejudice and the resultant insecurity and the quest for certainty and capitalistic prosperity. She resorts to chronological narration and divides the timeframe between the end of the Cold War and the balkanization process, to the period of globalization to the recent terror attacks including the Brexit outcome and the rise of far-right political parties in the global order.

These historic processes have been observed, studied and analyzed from the European perspective, for example, when she traces the rise of restlessness in the anxiety-ridden Europe. She asserts, “At least for older generations of Europeans - and particularly for those who live at the borders with

Balkan countries, and mainly Italian, Austrians and German - a region that reminds us of a painful historical memory - the start of the First World War. Those who lived in those years felt that even the Second World War was only a further consequence of the First, so much that some historians and analysts talk of 50 years of Civil War in Europe.” The author dexterously brings home the existential angst of the continent, which saw two World Wars that changed the global geo-political order.

The world, in the meantime, seems to have moved in altogether a different direction at the end of cold war, which in fact was the consequence of the Second World War itself. The second phase, heralded by the process of globalization, was an era of advanced capitalism. It was during this time that capital flow became much more easily but at the same time, it created massive barriers for human transnational movement.

A pertinent question that needs to be asked at this juncture is - was it based on prejudicial notion or was it because of economic reasons as the transnational empires of colonial powers were shrinking. A historical fact that needs to be analyzed is the human capital flow to Europe during the pre and post-colonial period. It should be noted that most of the human migration in the past was the result of colonial relationships that European countries shared with the countries they colonized. There was a mass human movement from England, Spain, France, and Portugal to various continents and when it ended in the second half of 20th century, a reverse migration from these colonies began to these European countries. A large part of these migrations were motivated to meet the latter’s manpower shortage to their expanding economy. It was during this phase of intercontinental interaction that perception; notions, predilections and prejudices were formed about people, nationalities, religions and the so-called human ‘races’. Although Bello excludes this phase of historical development in her enumeration on ‘prejudices’, a drill down on it could have done more justice to the contested subject that she has dealt with.

Bello has given a more humane face to human migration. Her observation that securitization of borders have not diminished illegal migration across the borders needs to be seen from this perspective, along with the fact that they are the victims of a system which is beyond their control. Quantitatively, a large part of European societies hold positive attitude towards immigrants but unfortunately this perception is being altered because of extraneous pressure put on the limited resources that these

countries have. Immigration alters demographic balance of a region by claiming a share in the existing healthcare and education system, to which the natives are sensitively possessive.

Another pertinent observation that Bello leaves us with is the concept of regions and empires in the global order and our faulty assumption of labeling them as mere markets. History has reasserted itself from time-to-time that a large part of geo-regional powers work on their own inherent historical logic instead of superimposed concept of market places. The case of Afghanistan, Syria and the Middle East are examples which have, time and again, brought this contradiction to the fore by claiming themselves as regions inhabited by ethnicity rather than markets of demand and supply. Probably, a lot of global conflict could be avoided if the geo-population is seen in the light of their historical development instead of economic utility value.

A prominent feature of the contemporary polity that Bello deals with is the rise of far-right populist ideology, which draws political mileage by framing migrants as “outsiders”. It is not something new in the conceptual framework as the rise of extremist views is always based on prejudiced views. Whether it is the rise of the Islamic State or the rise of nationalism in legitimate democracies, both harbor an ill-feeling towards a group of people who are alien to their social construct and are often framed as threat to their existence. It has also been a failure of conservative political parties who have not been able to counter and provide an alternative narration to meet the challenges of populist culture.

Realistically, it is hard to imagine a world without a populist culture as the very ideology governing democracies is based on numerical strength of a population favoring or disfavoring a particular public policy. There is no empirical evidence to suggest that a more liberal, porous trans-border movement could be a liberating force from the tyranny of insecurity, which is staring at the face of European insecurity. No doubt, the life of an undocumented migrant is abysmally hard and difficult and there are forces always ready to exploit their vulnerability as Bello says, “Making access to Europe harder will only increase the market of smugglers and human traffickers. Not only this, but it will increase the number of migrants residing undocumented in Europe. This will make them particularly vulnerable in the labour market and employers will take advantage of this, lowering workers’ condition, thus creating the phenomenon know as ‘social

dumping.”

Seen in the milieu of migration and migrants, ‘social dumping’ finds an equal parallel in yet another phenomenon explained by Bello called flexibilizaion, which can alternatively be seen as a by-product of large-scale commercialization and globalization of labour market as opposed to European model of Welfare State System. Under this system, a flexible worker is as vulnerable as an undocumented migrant. Explaining the phenomenon, Bello says, as I am tempted to quote it in full, excluding the references.

“Since the 1990s, financial hardships and other market vulnerabilities have been tacked in Europe with the so-called politics of “flexibilization”, whose main effects have been to change the European Social Model and Welfare State System. This was possible through the introduction of flexible contracts and the wider possibility of hiring freelancers for some services in positions that are supposedly independent from employer but that are indeed not.”

Now, what is obvious both in the case of an undocumented migrant and a flexible worker is - a deliberate lack of policy guidelines. It is not as if these facts are not known to nation governments, but their studied silence in coming out with a willed decision, either because of political exigencies or economic compulsions or both, is appalling. While imagined perception and prejudices play a role in the realm of an individual world-view, it is the political and economic realm, which decides the lives of an immigrant in the receiving country. Prejudice is one of the reasons for global security threat but not the only one. In fact, these prejudices if not nibbled in the bud lead to collective consciousness and give birth to xenophobia and fascist tendencies, which pose a greater threat to the global order.

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## V

**Rajan, S. I. (Ed) (2017). India Migration Reader. Routledge, New York, 188 pages, ISBN 9781138219625**

The book comes as a by-product of release of India Migration Report (IMR) and several annual reports on migration, in collaboration with CDS and Government of India. Owing to its immense popularity, it was decided to bring out the book containing chapters from IMR. These chapters cover wide range of issues concerning migration and development ranging from inter-state migration, international migration to diaspora settlements. The book contains 10 chapters on different themes from leading authors working in the area of migration studies across India.

The introductory chapter details out process and idea on how the book took its present shape from various IMRs. Five IMRs have been published till date and two chapters from each IMR has been transformed into 10 chapters of this book. The introductory chapter also brings forth the basic migration data which may provide a gist of the existing scenario of migration from various Indian states.

The first chapter provides a brief review on the existing policies of government of India towards migration. Pointing out the loopholes, the author has suggested reforms which should be undertaken by the Government of India in order to make migration policies more inclusive and tap the opportunity for migration led growth. Considering that India is one of the largest migration sending countries in the world and having a large diversity of workforce, it is very important to have policies that are useful for better migration management.

The second chapter provides a brief on the critical issues concerning Indian diaspora communities. The author points out the grave issue of lack of effective data as well as methodology to measure the count of Diasporas in different countries. This inefficiency stems partly from the conceptual definition which has been designed to understand diaspora. The chapter has also touched upon the contribution of Diasporas via remittances, technology and knowledge transfer, investment etc. The author concludes

the stance that the policy needs massive transformation to make it migrant friendly. Some of the suggestions provided by the author includes allowing of dual citizenship, establishing networks and contacts, understanding diaspora and capturing requisite data etc.

The third chapter looks at the migration debate through gender lens and discusses the complexities associated with conceptualizing female migration. Right from leaving their home to staying in the foreign land, the chapter discusses the issue of unequal access to resources, gendered division of work, health issues, unequal union rights, lack of access to legal help and trafficking of women. The author mentions the effect which female migration have, on family and economy. She further, draws policy recommendations in order to establish a ground for equal opportunity as well as welfare of the female migrants, both in origin and destination country.

Extending the debate further, Chapter 4 brings out how the policy treats men and women differently. The author has used the concept of social legitimacy to explain the categorization of migrant women with respect to risk involved. The chapter centers around important issues concerning female migration such as paternalistic attitude of state, sense of entitlement and negotiation at the origin country, lack of pre departure orientation, issue of visa trading by sponsor recruiter, strategies to restrict migration or nationalization of workforce etc. Having mentioned the issues, she brings out the role of civil society is promoting migration as well as keeping the migrants well informed, thereby ensuring their welfare.

The fifth chapter discusses the issues concerning migration and the importance of governing such human mobility. The author specifically focuses on the need of adoption of Common International Framework for governing migration. He brings out three major constraints with regards to adoption of such framework, namely, lack of shared/common good, absence of reciprocity and the absence of hegemonic power to safeguard the regime. Further, he also discusses about the future of migration where he mentions that due to change in social, economic and political structure of the countries around the world, the trend of migration can be expected to be more stable by 2025.

The sixth chapter discusses about the localization policies adopted by Saudi

Arabia to tackle increasing migration of low skilled labour from Kerala to Saudi Arabia, in response to the increasing youth unemployment of local population. Due to such policy, several manual jobs are left vacant since the Saudi youths are not willing to take such manual work. The chapter also sheds light on the future of immigration in the wake of such localization policies.

The next four chapters of the book deals with various aspects of internal migration. Seventh chapter is based on elaborating the trend of internal migration in India. As against common belief, the author have brought forth that internal migration of women is more than that of men. However, such migration is not dominated by labour movement, rather the increased women migration majorly accounts for post marriage migration. The author has also correlated migration and development variables to check how different variables are correlated with the aspect of migration. By doing so, the author has numerically established various push and pull factors of migration.

Eighth chapter has presented the migration led political actions which were aimed towards ethnic cleansing. By using case studies of different Indian states, the authors have elaborated on how increased internal migration has led to formation of ideas and organizations fighting towards preservation of native culture, jobs and identity. According to the authors, such actions discourage migration and calls for reform in migration policies and effective implementation of Migration Workmen Act 1979.

Chaper 9 dwells into the practices adopted by state with regards to employment of laborers. It examines the shift in the role of state in fulfilling the needs of migrant workers working in informal sector. The chapter, predominantly, focuses on informalization of formal work and the consequence of such practices.

The final chapter, chapter 10, has elaborated on different phenomenon of internal migration by comparing it with international migration simultaneously. It has detailed out on how the increased in supply of labour in different countries has led to increase in international migration, and how similar situation of increase in demand from urban centers attracts migrants from rural areas. Similarly, the role of remittances in international migration has been used to situate the role of remittances in

internal migration, thereby, the author leads towards correlating migration with poverty. Keeping inclusive development at the center of discussion, the author emphasizes the importance of policy measures to tackle vulnerability and exploitation of migrant workers.

Overall, the book contains a rich collection of papers on different aspects of both internal and international migration. The selection of chapters for the formation of book has been very apt as it touches upon social, economic and political aspects of migration. The book seems to be well designed to be included as an introductory course related to migration and development. It is useful for the researchers in the field of migration study. Formation of this book seems to have provided easy access to scholars across the world for gaining access to IMR. The book could have further been enriched had there been some chapters on international comparison of migration to different countries, role of gender in internal migration, policy response of different countries in order to manage migration, comparison of skilled and unskilled migration from India etc. However, we can hope and expect these topics to emerge in another book under same series of South Asia Edition.

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## VI

**Stanley Thangaraj, Daniel Burdsey and Rajinder Dudrah  
(eds.) (2014); Sport and South Asian Diasporas: Playing  
through Space and Time, London and New York: Routledge,  
pages, 128, ISBN10 1138019011**

“War minus the shooting” was what George Orwell once described international sport. He mentioned it as a critique of the overtly nationalist and political symbolism that sport transmitted and which people reacted to. Nevertheless, this piece of writing is one of the most important texts that acknowledged sport’s capacity for representativeness, and its capacity to refashion ideas and narratives within communities. It provides an interesting point of inquiry when it comes to studying diasporic society formation in host countries and how sport can play an important part in its processes. With this book, the authors have tried to understand and analyze particularly South Asian communities and how various sports- both their locally played ones as well as sports

played in the host country, help them assimilate and even refashion their own identities within the host countries. This collection of essays tries to analyze South Asian communities and tackles various issues regarding, nationalism, identity formation as well as tackling various concepts of masculinity and femininity and how they intersect with sport in these communities.

After an introductory chapter by the editors laying out the scope and the issues taken up in the various chapters of the book, the first article by Sameer Pandya deals with the specific experience of the professional golfer Vijay Singh and his often difficult relation with the American media post his success and stardom-which Pandya attribute to his extremely unconventional background especially in the predominantly white dominated sport of golf. Having come from a Fijian- Indian background and being in the wilderness of professional golf for many years, Vijay Singh rose to fame in the early 1990s by some spectacular performances in the prestigious PGA tour in the United States and eventually even being ranked world no. 1 for a period. However, where the American media was expecting a man grateful towards the American sporting society for providing a chance for a minority and a sporting outcast the opportunity for success, they would normally be greeted by a curt reservation by Singh himself. This led to a strained relationship with the media which led to many prominent journalists being frosty towards Singh despite his massive success.

Pandya, through excerpts of various prominent journalists covering Singh's rise at the time, argues that the exposure of Singh's apparent flaws always had an angle of the "ungrateful minority" who never acknowledged the opportunities that America provided him. As an example, Pandya shows Singh's disparaging remarks against Annika Sorenstam, the top woman golfer of the time, drew criticism not only because of its inherent sexism, but also mainly drew upon his indifference to struggles of minorities, something which he should apparently have had more empathy towards. However, Pandya does not absolve Singh from the straining of the relationship either contending that Singh's often conspicuous silence has been a major contributing factor to it. Compared to the immense attention garnered by the likes of Mohammad Ali, John Carlos and Tommie Smith for African American civil rights, Vijay Singh was perhaps the role model that never was for Asian American issues.

The next article by Shalini Shankar deals with the idea of affect and the use of South Asian celebrity athletes in advertising products for the South Asian communities in America. Vased on an ethnographic study consisting of qualitative interviews with various advertising executives around the America, the study looks at how celebrity South Asian athletes such as Sania Mirza, Shoaib Malik and Rahul Dravid are often used as instruments to get South

Asian communities relate to certain brands. For example, the study uses the example of how an insurance company uses the game of cricket, not a very popular sport in the US, as a backdrop to get their messages across for South Asian consumption. As such, the article tries to put forward an important concept- that of the South Asian community as a “model consumer”. South Asian communities in the US are generally regarded as hard working, educated and affluent, a so called “model minority”. Shankar contends that the use of sport and affect are used by companies to convert this “model minority” into a “model consumer” within the neoliberal framework, which in turn provides the opportunity for the reframing of classic race categorization in the United States.

Stanley Thangaraj provides the next article with his ethnographic study of the South Asian basketball community and their participation in the so- called “Asian Ballers League” in the American city of Atlanta. Thangaraj builds on previous experience of being part of a South Asian basketball team in the league and tries to analyze the interesting ways this South Asian group of South Asian assert and try to reframe their identities as Asian Americans. According to the aforementioned “model minority” trope, Asian Americans are often seen as “all brains, no brawn” and not particularly physical in their presence. Thangaraj shows how the South Asian basketball team, as well as the entire Asian Ballers League in general, tries to overturn that notion by participating in a physical sport like basketball- hitherto seen in a black/white racial binary. The essay also tries to examine the various sub categorizations and what it means to be “Asian-American” and how do South Asian communities fit within this normative understanding of race.

The next essay by Saima Ahmed explores the idea of young, educated Muslim women of Pakistani descent participating in basketball leagues in Britain and how the support allows them to refashion their identities. Ahmed shows how these young women challenge the traditional idea of Muslim femininity- one who is supposed to be timid and “oppressed”, by engaging in a traditionally masculine activity like basketball. Ahmed also quite interestingly includes the voices of the women themselves in how they themselves view their participation in the sport, by showing how they are still conscious of their femininity- “playing sport helps me keep fit and attractive” as one respondent puts it- while engaging with the traditional masculinity that engenders sport.

The next essay deals with the identity of the Afghan diaspora in Britain and trying to situate their place in British society through two extremely popular British sports- football and cricket. The author deals with British imperialist history as well as recent history of a displaced society in the wake

of the US invasion of Afghanistan. The article initially focuses on the widely acclaimed 2011 British documentary “Out of the Ashes”, which depicts the rise of the Afghan cricket team from a rag tag bunch of amateurs to a winning team. The author criticizes the documentary for depicting the Afghan cricket team as a successful project of a British civilizing effort, which may have brought a reluctant society from erstwhile barbarism to the light of British and modern civilization- as opposed to the violence brought upon their homeland by the British themselves a century and a half ago. The author compares the condescension towards the Afghan society shown in the backdrop of cricket, to the struggle to regain some of their place in society by engaging in football leagues in Britain a place where Afghan players try to find pride in who they are and in their traditional identity.

The next and final essay is an analysis of the specific characterizations and depictions of diasporic identity shown in two Bollywood movies- Patiala House and Chak de India. Patiala House is essentially the tale of an elderly Punjabi immigrant in England who distrusts the British establishment and his tussle with his son, who aspires to play cricket for the English cricket team- a thing his father counts as treachery . while the essay does focus on the tussle as a fight between identity and nationalism, the essay later focuses on the female voices in the movie. Essentially in the background, the female characters provide instances of cultural hybridity and tamed ambitions- depicted in the contrast between the lead female character who shows the confidence of her western upbringing and the more tamed female members of the household where the ego tussle between the male characters are taking place. The essay then shifts to the female hockey players depicted in the movie Chak de India. Though being from the same country, the characters come into the hockey team their specific regional and linguistic identities. The movie goes on to show how the earlier discredited coach, forces the players to give up their identities and its associated frictions to unite under the common consciousness of India- which leads them to win and redeem the coach. The author shows that while both movies essentially revolve around the male characters, the female voices in the movies provided equally (if not more) engaging stories themselves. The author suggests that the next generation diaspora movies in Bollywood would do well to get these voices to the forefront.

The final two essays in the book deal with the Pakistani diaspora. The first one by Thomas Michael Walle deals with the importance of cricket in the imagination of Pakistani immigrants in Oslo, Norway. The author shows how cricket and Pakistan’s success in cricket forms the basis of imagining an ideal picture of Pakistan in these immigrants. For these people, who have been removed from their homeland and its recent troubles, the cricket team’s success allows them

to imagine a Pakistan that could strive for success and excellence given the right mix of factors, and thus becomes an alternate source of homeland imagination for them. The next essay deals with the story of Haroon Iqbal Khan, a boxer and younger brother of the famous boxer Amir Khan who won an Olympic medal for Great Britain in the 2004 Athens Games. Following Haroon's participation in the 2010 Commonwealth Games and the media attention it got, the author uses it as a prism to deal with racial and ethnic assimilation and acceptance in British society over the years. Taking the example of the (in)famous Tebbit's test hypothesis, the author shows how athletes from different ethnic backgrounds have always had to strive harder than others to be accepted as "British" athletes in every sense of the word- they have always had to prove their loyalty to Great Britain at every step of their careers. The author shows this through the careers of Haroon and more famously Amir Khan, whose switch to professional boxing was seen as a treacherous move after hopes were pinned on him to provide more medals in subsequent Olympic Games. The essay shows a stark picture of how these athletes have the added burden of having to prove they are worthy of representing their countries of birth, which always plays in their minds and leads to often fractious relationships with the outside world.

Overall, the book tries to gather and analyze ideas which attempt to crystallize the various dimensions of the South Asian diaspora through the lens of sport. Sport, with its emphasis on community participation and representation, serves as an excellent prism for the book's primary objective of research. The book contends with familiar notions of race relations, identity formation, placing of these societies and refashioning the way these societies are perceived and assimilated in the host country with sport forming the backdrop as well as the main focus of these processes, which is certainly a novel point of analysis when it comes to diaspora formation. The various media which the essays deal with whether on the sporting field or through cinema provide platforms for the engagement of crucial questions- which is the central theme running through all the essays whether it be the refashioning of gendered stereotypes- both masculine and female or the retaining of a lost identity as explored in the essay on Afghan cricketers and footballers in the UK. This forms an interesting dimension to diaspora studies.

Having said that, the book does suffer when trying to assimilate these various themes and ideas into a single, coherent flow. Perhaps, the book could have done with a thematic categorization of essays to take the reader through a logical flow while reading. Instead the placement of essays does seem a bit jarring. The book also could have done with a greater focus on either region, ideas or confining the studies to only that of on-field ethnographies like the ones mentioned in the essays on the Asian basketball leagues or the Afghan

diaspora in the UK or a focus on film studies.

Nevertheless, the book is certainly valuable for the perspective it brings to the study of diaspora formation. Sport as a tool for analysis of diasporic societal formation is one that has been gaining ground in recent times and this book is a valuable addition to the growing literature in this budding field of study.

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## VII

**Loshini Naidoo, Jane Wilkinson, Misty Adoniou, and Kiprono Langat (2018) Refugee Background Students Transitioning Into Higher Education: Navigating Complex Spaces, Singapore: Springer, 170 pages, ISBN: 978-981-13-0419-4**

Migration is increasingly becoming a topic of keen interest for the States and non-state actors to formulate inclusive policies accommodating diversities. Specifically, forced migration is posing a significant challenge to the host countries in managing the refugee crises and its subsequent repercussions. Among several challenges, the education prospects of refugee background students become gloomy, especially in pursuing higher education. Additionally, there is a lack of information available on the issues faced by refugee background students in accessing higher education in the host countries. In such a context, the book titled “Refugee Background Students Transitioning Into Higher Education: Navigating Complex Spaces”, fills this crucial information gap by providing valuable insights.

The book has been written by four authors who are eminent educators in various universities of Australia. It contains eight chapters to cover almost all the issues relating to refugee background students and their aspirations to acquire smooth higher education, particularly in Australia.

The first three chapters are authored by Loshini Naidoo, which provides a rich amount of theoretical literature raising the concerns of barriers and challenges, confronted by refugee students in accessing higher education. Incorporation of excellent theoretical ideas of various prominent thinkers like Nancy Fraser and Amartya Sen has made the chapters insightful. The author suggests considering

education as a human right rather than a privilege to make it more inclusive and accommodative. Naidoo has provided an insight that higher education faculties need to have ample understanding of human rights discourse and issues related to “social justice, diversity, equity and discrimination” (p. 30) so that they can help refugee students in transitioning phase from school to the university. She has made the point that the inclusion of prior-life experiences of refugee background students into the public narrative is imperative to formulate inclusive education policies (p. 42).

Misty Adoniou has written chapter Four and Seven. She has presented rich accounts to show that “the culture of low-expectations fails to recognize refugees’ capacities, substantial life skills and knowledge” which results into under-recognised and under-utilised capabilities of refugee students (p. 54). Adoniou has presented the prior life-experiences of various respondents, who are students at the various Australian Universities to show that how their experiences can be “viewed as assets that can contribute to the academic and social cultures of universities, rather than problems to be solved” (p. 62). She has further explored the issue of English language proficiency as an essential criterion in higher education and has questioned the one-size-fits-all academic model. Adoniou argues that educators need to acknowledge and utilise the multilingual identity of refugee students to help them acquire English language skills (p. 121).

Chapter Five and Six are authored by Jane Wilkinson, who has attempted to identify significant enablers and barriers involved in the transition of refugee students from schools to university. She has provided various accounts to unravel “the role of teachers as cultural mediators for refugee background students” (p. 70). She argues that a “holistic approach to refugee education in schools is crucial in building students’ sense of inclusion and capacity to learn” (p. 84). Wilkinson has mentioned the intricacies involved in the process of getting in, getting through and getting on from university for the refugee background students covering the themes of aspiration, politics and policy in creating an enabling culture.

Chapter Eight is written by Kiprono Langat to showcase the crucial role of communities and out-of-university organisations in enabling the successful transition of refugee students into higher education (p. 131). He argues that “education, language and other social barriers are minimized by way of support networks and mentoring in the community” (p. 133). Langat has provided various strategies, and examples through which effective and active learning spaces can be created to aid the university transition process.

In concluding part of the book, authors raised concerns about the lack of social justice towards refugee students in terms of recognition, redistribution and representation. The book recommends for “whole university practices built on human rights” (p.162) to “build social cohesion” in the society. The book provides constructive approaches which can help Universities improve their policies and practices towards refugee students.

Incorporating views of education ministry officials, policy-makers and classmates of refugee background students could have provided more depth to the study. In overall terms, the book is a novel attempt to venture into the completely new domain, which looks into the transitioning phase of refugee background students aspiring for higher education. The book is well-researched with lots of case studies as well. Authors have interviewed many refugee students, who have struggled to reach into the higher education and thereby to provide readers with rich accounts of genuine grievances and obstacles which are usually faced by refugee students. The book can be highly recommended for the readers who want to understand the complexities involved in the higher education of the refugee background students studying in various Australian Universities. It is an important academic work for migration researchers, teachers, professors, human rights activists, policy-makers and anyone interested in understanding issues relating to refugee background students. The book effectively lays out the vision to formulate inclusive higher education policies for the refugee background students. This work is an exemplary attempt to open up the debates on crucial issues relating to refugees at the global level.

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