REVISITING DIASPORA: HISTORY, MIGRATION, AND MULTICULTURALISM OF SOUTH ASIANS IN BRITAIN

Tahseen Alam Choudhury, PhD
MA Essex, PhD Greenwich
Independent Researcher
London, UK
tahseen_chy@yahoo.com

Abstract. Multicultural Britain – when we refer to this identity of this English land, we denote something deeper and more significant than a mere study of the coexistence of communities with various cultures. The formative process of a country as multicultural consists of history, proliferation, reorientation and transformation of migrants in that country. If we look at the graph of multiculturalism in Britain, we can understand that it entails an exclusive study of diasporaisation that includes the history of diasporas in Britain, their arrival, their traumas, their struggle, their rise and transformation. Races from across the world arrived in Britain for various reasons and gave birth to a landscape of multiculturalism. Migrant communities spread all over the country form a platform of multi-cultures where they relentlessly interact with the host culture and thus begin to essay their shift to a new identity. South Asian communities in Britain have undergone these layers of evolution and metamorphosis since their arrival. Some noted writers from these communities have addressed various stages of diasporic experiences in their narratives. This essay briefly discusses this aspect of South Asian diasporic writers in Britain while examining the historical and socio-cultural contexts of diasporaisation.

Keywords: diasporaisation, history, multiculturalism, South Asian diasporas in Britain, narratives

In contemporary cultural studies, diaspora becomes a significant subject of research due to its emergence as a defining tool of cultures, identities and practices in the present global context. Diasporas, though refer to the existence of migrant groups in a host culture, have more to offer in understanding the evolution and metamorphosis of cultures, societies and nationalities. It is through

diasporas the transnational bridge of multiculturalism is constructed in today's world. This essay discusses the definition, history and critical analysis of diasporas with a discursive focus on South Asian diasporas in Britain.

Like its literal Greek meaning – scattering - this term posits an essence of displacement in its configuration. Its historical source is attributed to the exile and migration of the Jewish community to Babylon after the destruction of the Temple in Israel in the sixth century BC. There was a strong political motive rather than a religious impulse behind this destruction. Howard N. Lupovitch finds this context as central to the dispersal of the Jewish community, writing:

> In 598, King Jehoyakim joined an alliance of small states against Babylonia. Following the defeat of this alliance, the upper class of Judah was sent into exile, and Zedekiah, a quisling Vassal, was installed as king of Judah. A decade later, unable to quiet the surging nationalist sentiments, Zedekiah joined a revolt against the Babylonian rule. The revolt was defeated in 586, resulting in the destruction of the Temple and the wholesale expulsion of the Israelites population to other parts of the Babylonian Empire. (Lupovitch 2010, 22)[1]

Historically, it is evident that the formation of diaspora, in the case of Jewish people, was caused by enforced political exile and expulsion from Israel. Three facets of this exile have become important to contemporary understandings of the concept of diaspora. First, the members of the Jewish community felt that their best option was to leave Israel. Second, their leaving was, however, not entirely based on freedom of choice and third, exile was accompanied by feelings of homelessness and alienation. The persecution of Jews continued when they lived in non-native locations. John D. Klier, for example, describes pogroms in Tsarist Russia in *The Pogrom Paradigm in Russian History*:

> The word "pogrom" is Russian. Its usage became inextricably linked to antisemitic violence after the outbreak of three great waves of anti-Jewish rioting in the Russian Empire in 1881-2, 1903-6 and 1919-21. It was widely charged at the time and since that the Russian government either planned,

welcomed, or at least tolerated pogroms for its own devious purposes. (Klier 2004, 13)

Pogroms and similar waves of persecution led to the dislocation and displacement of Jews across Europe, and they were seen as the quintessential diaspora, political migrants striving to live in a foreign domain. In the middle of the twentieth century, when six million European Jews were massacred by Nazis during the Holocaust, a mass migration of Jewish communities towards America and different countries of Europe took place, forming a new Jewish diaspora. Therefore, "[t]he seemingly endemic nature of Jewish migration gives an image of an overriding sense of Jewish homelessness and rootlessness in the diaspora" (Lupovitch 2010, 02).

The use of the term diaspora to indicate a politically motivated scattering has been extended in relation to other groups that have been subject to European, including British, imperialism. In his research on British imperialism in the nineteenth century India Simon Smith explains that:

> In the period between the revocation of the East India Company's trading monopoly in 1813 and the revolt of 1857-58, Britain intervened ever more intrusively in Indian society. After 1858, despite recognising the folly of seeking to refashion India in her own image, Britain exploited Indian resources as never before. (Smith 1998, 50)

By exploiting the resources of colonies, the imperialist policies not only enriched Britain's national economy but also jeopardised the political and economic stability of colonised nations, creating numerous rootless, homeless subjects. In another historical survey of British imperialism by Bernard Porter, the "native policy" of British colonisers in the Indian subcontinent is seen as a route to "radical social change" - the total Europeanisation of the subcontinent (Porter 1975, 17-19). The policy was designed to disseminate the values of English culture among the colonised

Indians and thus caused internal chaotic cultural conflicts. This is reflected in William Wilberforce's comment, quoted by Porter:

> Let us endeavour to strike our roots into the soil by the gradual introduction and establishment of our own principles and opinions; of our laws, institutions, and manners; above all, as the source of every other improvement, of our religion, and consequently of our morals. (Porter 1975, 19)

The imperialist practices caused a widespread revolution against the colonisers but, at the same time, left the colonised with embedded structures of colonial power. "[A] middle class educated in English", who eventually became "the agents of cultural dissemination", managed to create a fascination for English life and culture. (Porter 1975, 21) A large number of colonised people were encouraged to migrate from India to Britain, thus relocating themselves beyond their national boundary in the pursuit of English life.

Historically, the culture of diasporisation was initiated even long before the era of British imperialism. A large number of Africans were enslaved and sold to African Muslim territories. In a historical survey of black diaspora by Ronald Segal, it becomes evident that:

> West African societies had slaves: as royal retainers, often in metalworking and other honoured occupations, as agricultural labour, and as porters for the trading caravans. References to the export of black slaves to North Africa only begin appearing in the twelfth century, however, and it was only with the mounting European demand from the sixteenth century onward that the large-scale of trade in slaves from the forest region developed. This trade would become the dominant factor in politics across much of black Africa. (Segal 1995, 09)

The expansion of European imperialism included importing slaves from Africa and other colonial territories and this, for Segal, remained a regular phenomenon on the part of the white British aristocrat class (Segal 1995, 13). A substantial number of black slaves arrived in England in the eighteenth century as part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Segal points out that "[e]stimates of the number

of blacks in eighteenth-century Britain vary widely. The Gentleman's Magazine in 1764 claimed that there were 20,000 in London alone" (Segal 1995, 265). In addition to trading slaves of African origin, Britain also experienced the influx of South Asians, who arrived as slaves or even as mistresses and wives[2]. This resulted in countless people being scattered forcibly across the country as the metropolis could hardly ensure social and financial stability for most of these new migrants:

> London effectively operated a colour bar in employment. Inevitably there were those who were reduced to begging, while women became prostitutes, as a way of surviving and supporting the family, until taken from street to prison for their activities. Others left London for work in the provincial towns or the countryside, the men as artisans or agricultural labourers, the women as laundresses, seamstresses or children's nurses. (Segal 1995, 264)

The displacement of black and Asian slaves in Britain formed multiple locations for diasporic life in the country.

Caroline Adams, in her *Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers*, provides the history of a particular community of South Asians and its arrival in Britain. She tells of the seamen and ship workers from Bengal who absconded from anchored ships at the docks of London, Cardiff and Tilbury to escape the hardship of sea life and have a better life in the country. There was no strict legislation regarding immigration. Adams writes:

> For those on the ships, whether before or during the war, the trips ashore when the ship docked at Liverpool, Cardiff or Tilbury, had a special flavour. Calcutta, the port from which they had come, was the Second City of the Empire and London was the first. They were the subjects of the British king, and London was their capital, as much as his (Adams 1987, 39).

Adams explains that ship workers from South Asia used to have little difficulty settling in Britain. They might have jumped ship, but life and work were not necessarily limited by the activities of the immigration authorities. In Adams's words, "[t]he police had no reason to bother them, as they had broken no law in coming ashore,

being citizens of British India" (Adams 1987, 42). A small number of seamen from Bangladesh (specifically, from Sylhet) settled in East London. They became the initial point of contact and source of assistance for the rest of ship workers. Therefore, "[b]y the mid-1930s (…) the lure of London was becoming too strong to resist and the spreading network of contacts led to the growing fashion of 'jumping ship' in British ports" (Adams 1987, 40).

In addition, at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century, a substantial number of middle-class and upper-middle-class Indians arrived in Britain in the pursuit of academic and professional careers. Sukhdev Sandhu's research reveals that "[t]he lure of culture has also been a magnet throughout the centuries. London offered a passport to sophistication, learning and self-improvement" (Sandhu 2004, 183). The capital of Britain attracted the middle-class gentry and the descendants of aristocratic families in India, who hoped to come and experience the brilliance of British education and culture. Many Indian veterans, especially from the West Bengal, arrived here to educate themselves. Raja Rammohon Roy, Darkanath Tegore, Mohandas Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Mulk Raj Anand were among those who explored Britain as a place of learning and intellectual development. As Gulam Murshid has found:

> A number of ship workers (lascars) fled the ship and settled in England; nonetheless, most of the earliest migrant settlers in Britain from Bengal were highly educated and skilled professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and barristers. Coming for education to Britain, they settled permanently in Britain through their matrimony with English women[3].

At this stage, we can identify three major contexts - political, economic and cultural - that are significant for the formation of a diaspora such as the South Asian one in Britain.

How is diaspora defined in the current cultural analysis? Attributing its formation to the political and economic context following World War II, contemporary critics define diasporas as migrant communities displaced from colonised countries and

relocated in a colonial centre. In a jointly-conceived essay, *Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies*, Jana Evans Brazeil and Anita Mannur attempt to theorise 'diaspora' in terms of its proliferation since the late 1940s:

> The term "diaspora" has been increasingly used by anthropologists, literary theorists, and cultural critics to describe the mass migrations and displacements of the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in reference to independence movements in formerly colonized areas, waves of refugees fleeing war-torn states, and fluxes of economic migrations in the post-World War II era. (Brazeil and Mannur 2003, 03)

Brazeil and Mannur chart the nationalist and economic issues of migration, but also note that diaspora has a human context as well. Diaspora involves the displacement of the cultures and social values of peoples who strive to come to terms with existence in a non-native context. This dispersal of peoples gives rise to myths associated with the experiences of exile, loss and nostalgia and the intensity of feeling for the homelands creates a vision of "home and away". While, in "diasporic understandings", "home" encompasses the reflection of identity, ancestry and national culture, "away" signifies some sort of loss and can be "generalized into a representative typology or definitions of what a diaspora might be" (Kalra, Hutnyk, Kaur 2005, 11). This definition of diaspora presents a twofold understanding of diaspora in which the experience of exile is both geographical and emotional. It is this twofold understanding that has informed the treatment of the South Asian diaspora in this thesis. Defined by geography and expressed in literature, emotional responses to diaspora will be explored.

The physical dislocation is accompanied by the sense of "homelessness", which is psychologically very influential in forming diasporic cultures. Rather than dealing with historical, geopolitical, and socio-economic facets of the South Asian diaspora in England, this essay, following Brazeil and Mannur, studies the psychological implications of exile, alienation and nostalgic consciousness in a way to address the tension between upholding the national values of the

group and assimilating with the host culture. In doing so, this analysis highlights the doubleness of migrant experiences. It exposes diasporic emotions and feelings for home, the recreation of an imaginary home in the face of social discrimination, and the cultural strangeness of a host culture which defines minorities within the framework of otherness. Simultaneously, it underlines the growing crises of identity and the emergence of cultural hybridity due to the fluid nature of cultural practices. In this analysis, South Asian diasporic novels such as Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* (1972), Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988), Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Sunetra Gupta's *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1996) and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) are seen as negotiating the issues related to South Asian experiences in Britain and, importantly, as also exemplifying the creative expertise of South Asian writers in their intersection with, and restructuring of, western discourses of narrative in terms of content and form[4].

Why is the narrative used as the basis of analysis? From socio-political and economic perspectives, diaspora refers to the grouping of people from migrated ethnic communities in the culture of majorities. These members have been displaced and dispersed from their native home due to political and economic instabilities in their own country. Political unrest causes severe economic difficulties and thus brings about disintegration at the national level; it compels people from different walks of life - political and social activists, writers and intellectuals - to leave their homeland for an improved, more secure life overseas. The scattering across the world leads to the application of the term "diasporic migration" to describe any movement of people caused by such conditions in a formerly colonised country. For example, the Pakistani socialist writers Tariq Ali and Nadeem Aslam are in exile in Britain, having left Pakistan under the threat of military aggression. Another noted South Asian writer, Salman Rushdie, has been condemned to a life in exile in England following the controversy over *The Satanic Verses* across the Islamic fundamentalist countries and his homeland of India. In the writings of Romesh Gunesekera, the political unrest of Sri-Lanka is

depicted with such intensity that readers are drawn to the feelings of exile prevailing in the author's personal experiences. Creative art offers insights into the diasporic experience. Writers construct the particular shape of a community's notion of diaspora, endorsing particular experiences of physical alienation, visions of the homeland and the relationships with the host culture. The american political scientist William Safran best explains the structure of a diasporic experience, outlining the characteristics of diasporic peoples as follows:

> 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral", or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not - and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate. (Safran 1991, 83)

Safran's first point refers to a postcolonial understanding of the relationship between the centre and the margin. While postcolonialism will be discussed in greater depth at the beginning of the next section, here it defines the diaspora's place of origin as the centre from which the migrants are relocated to the metropolis/capital of the host in the present decolonised scenario. His second and third points reveal both the myth of diasporic bonding with "home" and the loss of belongingness. However, the relationship between the centre and the margin is repositioned as the legacy of diaspora becomes cross-cultural due to its convergence and connection with the host culture. Safran's fourth point indicates that the homeland is held up as the ideal destination of return. It comes into debate with the opinion of Brazeil and Mannur, according to whom diasporas are marked by hybridity and heterogeneity - cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national (Brazeil and Mannur 2003, 5). The ambivalence of cultural values caused by the

fluidity of cultures questions the purity of identity and the binary between host and "home". Safran's notion of return to the homeland is destabilised by the hybrid "diaspora identities" found in the narratives of the South Asian diaspora in Britain analysed here. Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* (1996), for example, address explicitly this aspect of the diaspora in their narratives, portraying identities as constantly mutating, impure, fragmented, and multicultural.

In contemporary postcolonial studies, the formation and development of diasporas and diasporic cultures are described as involving transnational identity. This is a redefined form of postcolonial identity involving multiple constructions of national identities beyond original national boundaries. Identities are configured by multiple nationalities actively engaged in interactions and encounters with the dominant culture. Migrant identities no longer remain in a state of homogeneity in terms of national culture, as they are confronted, influenced and finally reformed by their host. According to Stuart Hall, diasporic identities "are producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall 1994, 402). Hall's reference to "transformation and difference" indicates the shift from a so-called universal identity (with a national base) to a transnational one. Identifying the "difference" amongst the coexisting diasporas and the host and balancing these differences creates a functional transnational culture. This transformed culture not only involves an interactive network of diasporas but also highlights contestation and resistance in the form of mimicry. This challenge claims to homogenous identity. In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy defines this community relationship with the host culture as forming a "politics of transfiguration" which "emphasizes the emergence of qualitatively new desires, social relations, and modes of association within the racial community of interpretation and resistance and between that group and erstwhile oppressors" (Gilroy 1999, 37). It is clear from Gilroy's analysis that there is a departure from the cultural hegemony of whiteness as the black races in Britain (in which we

can also include the South Asians) contribute to the formation of a new culture consisting of diverse values, perspectives and identities. These formative elements of the new culture encounter resistance on the part of both the host and the diasporic communities as each yearns for pre-existing national values but also strives to address the cultural and political agendas of underprivileged minorities in the host culture. So "[t]he politics of transfiguration strives in pursuit of the sublime, struggling to repeat the unrepeatable, to present the unpresentable. Its rather different hermeneutic focus pushes towards the mimetic, dramatic and performative" (Gilroy 1999, 38). South Asian diaspora, like many other diasporas, are refigured as transnational cultures which make the "unpresentable" presentable through the fusion of multicultural values and identities. This is very clearly reflected in the novels of contemporary South Asian writers in England, whose works have revealed a significant exchange of values between the West and the East. The writers address the political currency of identities and the issue of cultural transformation from Asian to "British Asian" in their fictions. For example, Ravinder Randhawa's first novel *A Wicked Old Woman* (1987) narrates the tale of its protagonist Kulwant Singh's transformation from a personality shaped by traditional ethnic values to a restructured identity, that of an Asian Briton. Randhawa's novel is a pioneering attempt to "map out a new territory for the representation of the diversity of Asian British lives" (Nasta 2002, 182).

This cultural heterogeneity has divergent formative elements that estrange diasporas from any sense of "purity". They shift from the stage of sensitive nationalism to, in the words of Bhabha:

[L]ocality of culture' which 'is more around temporality than about historicity: a form of living that is more complex than "community" (…) less homogeneous than hegemony; less centred than citizen; more collective than "the subject" more psychic than civility; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications that can be represented in hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism. (Bhabha 1995, 140)

According to Bhabha, culture is fluid and dynamic rather than static and homogeneous. There are diverse practices, values and aspirations that imbue the different cultures with the essence of particularity while their mutual coexistence combines them within the framework of hybridity. They proliferate and radically question the idea of the location of culture at a universal centre. The decentered existence of cultures forms a multicultural context that destabilises any claim of racial hierarchy. This is how culture becomes temporal and local. Diasporic culture, if examined from this perspective, is also identified as local, fragmented, complex and hybrid departing from the Orientalist idea of presenting it as a culture of "social antagonism".

Although contemporary theorists are in agreement that the Orientalist conceptions of the diaspora are outdated, these conceptions are important insofar as they influence the way diasporas were (and, in some ways, continue to be) treated, and diaspora writers address these conceptions in their narratives. Orientalism originated in Europe and America, where Western thinkers imagined the Eastern perspective based on limited and prejudiced understanding of people from the East as exotic and socially and intellectually inferior. In Frenchman Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' harem paintings of the nineteenth century, for example, the Oriental was depicted with an inference of cultural backwardness. Due to this preconceived notion, South Asian minorities entering Britain as colonial slaves and ship workers were seen as both "other" and inferior, and thus appointed to menial jobs during their early stage of migration. This struggling phase was followed by a phase during which antagonism intensified. Racial attacks by white-skinned British citizens and the use of the slurs "Paki" and "Wog" were a common phenomenon in England even until the second part of the last century.

The scenario of racial conflict in begins to change with a growing consciousness regarding human rights among the immigrants, who contested and questioned the practice of racial discrimination. In addition, the dissolution of western political hegemony in the

colonised territories and the stream of migration to the West, especially to Britain, from various decolonised territories, led to a shift in the culture of racial superiority. In the new analysis, the co-existence of different races and their relationship with the host should be interpreted in terms of mutual tolerance, equality and racial fraternity. Britain, therefore, with her new changing landscape, can become a secular and democratic domain of world politics. In spite of persistent racial discrimination, Britain emerges as a platform for the coexistence and fusion of multicultural migrant communities. Diasporas, in this hybrid multicultural context, no longer intend to remain within the margin of "otherness" like their predecessors; instead, there is an openness to accept and adopt the cultural learning and values of British culture. Migrant minorities make their effort to be a part of this culture instead of being secluded or excluded from it.

While accepting the influence of the host culture, diaspora communities are not completely divorced from their national cultures of origin, as they are continually in contact with their families and societies. Therefore, diasporic culture accommodates the practices and cultural codes of communities and cultures of origin as well as, to a considerable extent, British culture. These multiple components, then, bring about the complex forms of diaspora. By reflecting dominant values and accepting incorporation into the host culture, the diaspora reinforces the prevalence of the host culture. Some sociologists and postcolonial critics view this paradox as the loss of "cultural uniqueness". For William Safran, minority communities fail to preserve the framework of their native culture "if they are surrounded by a numeric strong majority whose culture is attractive and whose economy has a significant cooptive potential" (Safran 2000, 13). Dissipation of native culture can be viewed in both positive and negative terms as the loss of traditional beliefs is offset by the economic benefits of assimilation.

Cultural discrepancies between home and the host culture intensify the emotional longing for "home" among the migrants and the notion of being "away" contributes to feelings of loss and

detachment. Such alienation from "home" breaks the notion of "home" into fragments of imagination. Affirming his diasporic standing, Salman Rushdie describes his view of "home" and "away":

> It's my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time (…). It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge (…) that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (Rushdie 1991, 09-10)

What Rushdie articulates is the ambivalent relationship diasporic people have with their place of origin, which in their dislocated present becomes an "imaginary homeland" due to their prolonged alienation from it. They desire to reclaim a lost past, but their physical separation from their homeland and their proximity to a new culture reduce the scope for precise reproduction. That is why, though the significance of home inspires the urge to reclaim an original national culture, physical alienation from the homeland makes it problematic for migrants to recreate home in real terms. Instead, an imaginary homeland is created, which is not simply "true" but "imaginatively true" and which, as Rushdie says, is simultaneously "honourable and suspect" as they are "obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost" (Rushdie 1991, 10-11). In addition, diasporas frequently encounter the cultural effects of co-existent diasporas resulting in a hybridity that tends to transcend what Manjitinder Singh calls "the limits of racialised, colonized and national identities" (Singh 2007, 18). The psychological aspects of diasporic studies address the inter-complicity of different ethnic minorities in a world which is not theirs but in which they are striving to relocate themselves.

The confrontations and encounters between multiple migrant communities lead to a radical exchange of cultural practices and the weaving of a multicultural network of diasporas that reveals culture as de-territorialised. It is because "diasporas formate cross national borders, they reveal precisely the fact that cultural practices are not tied to place" (Smith 2004, 256). The notion of purity of national culture begins to wither in the wake of cross-cultural interaction among different nations and races beyond the territory of their homes. This is how a platform of multiculturalism, one that endorses diasporic culture, has come into being at the heart of the metropolis. In this way, in contemporary cultural studies, the diaspora has been included within the discourse of postcolonialism which, along with its anti-colonial and postmodern implications, highlights multicultural reconfigurations.

NOTES

1. Specifically, "the Chaldeans, following standard Mesopotamian practice, deported the Jews after they had conquered Jerusalem in 597 BC. The deportations were large but certainly didn't involve the entire nation. Somewhere around 10.000 people were forced to relocate to the city of Babylon, the capital of the Chaldean empire. In 586 BC, Judah itself ceased to be an independent kingdom, and the earlier deportees found themselves without a homeland, without a state, and without a nation. This period, which actually begins in 597 but is traditionally dated at 586, is called the Exile in Jewish history". "Exile (597-538 BC)." In *Jewish Virtual Library.* Accessed May 28, 2013. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Exile.html

2. Gulam Murshid has recorded the history of Bengalis in his book *Kalapanir Hatchhani: Bilete Bangalir Ithihas* (*The Call of Sea: History of Bengalis in Britain*) written in Bangla and published in Dhaka by Abosar, in February 2008. He has described several stages of migration of Bangla spoken people from the Indian subcontinent. According to Murshid, the English rulers bringing of slaves, mistresses and wives from Indian colonies to Britain was one form of migration. Murshid also writes about Bengali ship workers who settled in Britain as economic migrants and who struggled through financial hardship and who were caught between two cultures.

3. In *The Call of Sea*, Murshid discusses about the arrival of Bengali scholars in

Britain in search of academic excellence. In the second chapter (*Bileti Biddar Shondhane - In Pursuit of British Education*, 58-118) and the fourth chapter (*Bangali Boshotir Gorapttan - Laying the Foundation of Bengali Settlement*, 164-211) Murshid gives an account of the settlement of Bengali migrants in Britain. Here we see how this migrant community initiated diasporic life in the British landscape. *See* p.1 64 for the original quotation written in Bangla, translated above [my translation].

4. Dates of first publication of novels by South Asians in Britain are supplied in parenthesis after the first reference to each novel.

REFERENCES

Adams, Caroline. *Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers Life Stories of Pioneer Sylheti Settlers in Britain*. London: THAP Books, 1987.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Brazeil, Jana Evans and Anita Mannur. *Theorizing Diaspora* (ed. Jana Evans Brazeil and Anita Mannur). UK & USA: Blackwell, 2003.

"Exile (597-538 BC)." In *Jewish Virtual Library*. http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary. org/jsource/History/Exile.html. 28 August 2018.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London & New York: Verso, 1999.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory A Reader* (ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman). England: Longman, 1994, 392-403.

Kalra, Virinder; John Hutnyk; Raminder Kaur. *Diaspora and Hybridity*. London & Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005.

Klier, John D. *Pogroms Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza). UK and USA: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Lupovitch, Howard N. *Jews and Judaism in World History*. London & New York: Routledge, 2010.

Murshid, Gulam. *Kalapanir Hatchhani: Bilete Bangalir Ithihas (The Call of Sea: History of Bengalis in Britain)*. Dhaka: Abosar, 2008.

Nasta, Susheila. *Home Truths: Fictions of South Asian Diaspora in Britian*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Porter, Bernard. *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism 1850-1970*. London & New York: Longman, 1975.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta, 1991.

Safran, William. "Spatial and Functional Dimensions of Autonomy: Cross-national and Theoretical Perspective." In *Identity and Territorial Autonomy in*

Plural Societies (ed. William Safran & Ramón Máiz). London & Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000: 11-33.

Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, no. 1 (1991): 83-99.

Sandhu, Sukhdev. *London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City*. London: Harper Perennial, 2004.

Segal, Ronald. *The Black Diaspora*. London: Faber & Faber, 1995.

Singh, Manjitinder. "Settled-Unsettledness: From Human to Diaspora Aesthetics." In *Diasporic Studies Theory and Literature* (ed. Gurupdesh Singh). Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 2007: 11-21.

Smith, Andrew. "Migrancy, Hybridity and Postcolonial Literary Studies." In *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* (ed. Neil Lazarus). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 241-261.

Smith, Simon C. *British Imperialism 1750-1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.