

ISSN: 0976-8165

Vol.8, Issue-V (October 2017)

THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Refereed and Indexed Open Access eJournal

8th Year of Open Access

The Criterion 

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

www.galaxyimrj.com

Diasporic-Gendered Histories: A View of Sri Lankan Women Writers in Australia—Yasmine Gooneratne and Chandani Lokugé

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Article History: Submitted-29/08/2017, Revised-27/10/2017, Accepted-06/11/2017, Published-20/11/2017.

Abstract:

The major objective of this research paper is to focus on the problems of the Indian female expatriates and immigrants in Australia and to bring into light their diasporic experience in the host lands. The analysis is of migration experience and life style of Indians in Australian land and this experience is constituted in migration, partition, resettlement and socio-economic assimilations. For Sri Lankan-Australian female writers, one of the most important themes of their writing is the nostalgia for ancestral home and sense of homelessness with rootlessness. Some writers regret for loss of their homeland while others take it positively by having expanded view of human experience and interaction with and inclusion of diverse cultures. In this regard, diasporic writing by Sri Lankan-Australian writers attains an objective of accepting and celebrating marginality in one hand and embracing cultural diversities and variations. In this research paper, I have focused at two novels Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change of Skies* (1991) and Chandani Lokugé's *If the Moon Smiled* (1991). These two writers explore the experiences and perceptions of their protagonists in relating to the landscape, people and cultural traditions within the Australian context into which they have migrated from different Asian countries. Their novels are chronicles, providing historical information which has been taken as a less important issue for Australian self-image in the past. Novels with family chronicles claim that Australian identity symbolizes plurality instead of exhibiting single set of attributes. Family histories emanating from the minds of Indian immigrant women writers make a stretch and elaborate the conceptions of Australian social and political historical account.

Keywords: hybridity, postcolonial, intercultural, assimilation.

Postcolonial and historical approaches have been used to critically examine Yasmine Gooneratne's novel *A Change of Skies* and Chandani Lokugé's novels *If the Moon Smiled* and *Turtle Nest*. I have been captivated by Homi K.Bhabha, a remarkable figure in contemporary cultural discourse and in this paper I invoke Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity and the third space and this theory has been used to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial oppression and antagonism. Bhabha claims that a new hybrid identity emanates from the intermixing of elements of the coloniser and the colonised disapproving the reliability and accuracy of essentialist cultural identity. He proposes hybridity as a form of liminal or in-between space and where translation and

negotiation take place and which he refers the third space. According to Bhabha this third space is an ambivalent site where cultural meaning takes multiple meaning without any fixity. The concept of hybrid third space provides a positive sign of inclusion rather than exclusion and originates new indicators of identity and advanced sites of alliance and disagreement.

Ever since multiculturalism's early years, Asian women's fiction has flourished in Australia. Sri Lankan novelists Yasmine Gooneratne and Chandani Lokugé have followed the same path. They write in their novels about exchanging one culture for another. Chandani Lokugé received her secondary education at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo and PhD from Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. She became a permanent resident of Australia with her family in the 1980s. Currently, she is a lecturer in the English Department at Monash University. Yasmine Gooneratne is a novelist, poet and critic. She did graduation from the University of Ceylon in 1959 and received PhD in English Literature from Cambridge University in 1962. Gooneratne became a resident of Australia in 1972. She now holds a Personal Chair in English at Macquarie University, located in New South Wales.

My purpose is to explore the pleasures and problems associated with being a migrant writer and to indicate how South Asian Australian fictions support or subvert the pedagogic drive of state-based multiculturalism. I would like to start my paper with the general narration of the European settlement of America. Indigenous Australians were the real owners of the land. Castles proclaims that "for Australia immigration has been a crucial factor in economic development and nation building ever since British colonization started in 1788" (Castles & Miller 57). This immigration from European lands can be fragmented into three different stages. Australia was established as a penal colony with its first group of immigrants who were transported as convicts along with New South Wales Corps as an authority for monitoring them. This group is recognized as the first European immigrants. In the presence of strict rules of Asian immigration, the cheap indentured labour was brought from India, Sri-Lanka China, and Pacific islands between 1868 and 1876 (Rivett 19). The initial years of Australia were the years of settlement and establishment so cheap labour was an intensive need, exclusively for labour dependent industries, such as Queensland sugarcane plantations. Europeans were offered low wages for making 'white sugar' and this prospect was unintelligible for attracting Europeans. Indentured labour was recruited from European countries by agents to Australia. These labourers had to work for low wages and sheltered under squalor and unhygienic conditions.

During 1880 with the opening up of new opportunities of farming in new lands and with great success of rural and urban industry it gave rise a new hope and venture for getting an endless streak of laborious and skilful Asians for satisfying the requirement of more labour. The prime objective behind this belief was to transform the 'huge wilderness of Australian' into a 'fruitful garden' (Willard, 1967:1-2). With the inclusion of Chinese and Indian labor as immigrants, strong violent feelings aroused among working classes and this resulted in occasional riots. This is the environment into which Yasmine Gooneratne's central figure Edward steps into when he lands in Queensland for the cane plantations to the north colony. This research paper examines deeply the 'uprootings' and 'regroundings' (Ahmed 1). These

uprootings and regroundings include synergies, metamorphosis, bereavement, troubles and hardships in the experience of migration.

In *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), Salman Rushdie extracts the popular words from L P Hartley's work *The Go-Between*: '...the past is a foreign country, they do things differently there' but he inverts this idea and states that instead '...it is the present that is foreign and the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time' (Rushdie 9). Said identifies and carries this idea as 'infinity of traces' (25) concerning the past, but for an expatriate, the experience of fragmentation, personal anguish due to discrimination and sense of rootlessness in case of rejection by host countries, is particularly intense and unbearable on account of being 'out-of-country' and even 'out-of-language' (Rushdie 12). Rushdie describes that people in diasporic zone are hybridized and modified in translation, and only this hybridization brings innovation.

Over the past two decades, the concept of hybridization and hybridity of people has made a significant place in the literary zone. This study of race and hybridity has totally changed the critical analysis of literature. T. S. Eliot states:

The migrations of modern times...have transplanted themselves according to some social, religious, economic or political determination, or some peculiar mixture of these...The people have taken with them only a part of the total culture...The culture which develops on the new soil must therefore be bafflingly alike and different from the parent culture: it will be complicated sometimes by whatever relations are established with some native race and further by immigration from other than the original source. In this way, peculiar types of culture sympathy and culture-clash appear. (Eliot cited in Bhabha 54)

These incomplete cultures or partial cultures are the "links, the boundary between often different cultures, the hybrids that confound any essential notion of purity or nationalism" (Bhabha 57). This migrating experience and expatriation takes a primary place of scrutiny in contemporary literary analysis, precisely because it is fragmented and actually a very complex state of mind which includes a wistful longing for the past, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new, and incorporation of elements of both originary and host cultures in the performance of identity.

Like Rushdie, the two Indo-Australian female writers focused on in this paper Yasmine Gooneratne and Chandani Lokugé, were born in similar geographical and cultural locations. These two coloured expatriate female writers face a multi-cultural situation and their full share of racial discrimination. This geographical difference constrain themselves to resolve the tensions between nostalgia for the past and the needs of the present. This movement across spatial and cultural boundaries is mirrored in the experiences of the protagonists and which further assists in redefining the notions of home and location which Homi Bhaba refers as 'Third Space' or 'interstitial space' which helps in the "profound process of redefinition" of identity (5).

The novels are chiefly set in Australia but the homelands of immigrant characters are alive in their imagination and reserved in the form of texts, and migratory moves are featured in both novels of Gooneratne's *A Change of Skies* and Chandani's *If the Moon Smiled*. These two novels focus on migration processes and Indian characters' cultural encounter with Australia and Australians. *A Change of Skies* has been narrated from adult immigrants' point of view.

If the Moon Smiled (1991) focuses on the problems of diaspora through the fragmented consciousness of a troubled diasporic woman protagonist. *Turtle Nest* (2003) deals with problematic intercultural relations and hyphenated identities the female characters in their novels count the benefits of gaining privacy, freedom, egalitarianism against the cost of losing the extended family spirituality tradition and status that were theirs in Sri-Lanka. The women protagonists in *If the Moon Smiled* and *Turtle Nest* are desperately miserable in Australia in seeking solace in returning, one spiritually to Buddhism, and the other physically to her mother's home on the Sri-Lankan shore. In both works Lokugé weaves her sad narratives assured their inner emotional lives. With these novels Lokugé has moved Australia women's diaspora fiction interestingly forward.

Yasmine Gooneratne has been living in Australia for the last twenty years and her personal experience as an immigrant has been depicted through the protagonist. Through *A Change of Skies*, she has made an attempt to examine the cultural confusion and confrontation of the multi-racial society. She has primarily focused on clash of cultures and need of assimilation and adaptation as a weapon for survival in host land. Through her novel *A Change of Skies*, Gooneratne has captured the Sri-Lankan diaspora and provides several discourses for exploring the identity of Australia. These discourses, pregnant with Gooneratne's humorous insights, take the form of the migrants who contribute to 25 percent of Australia's population. Mycak (2006) observes in this regard: "Almost one quarter of Australia's population were born overseas, and a further fifth are the children of parents from abroad. And the remainder has been host to successive waves of new arrivals from many countries" (Mycak 14).

In *A Change of Skies*, experiences of Edward highlight another significant moment in the development of Australian colonial history. A short description of Sri-Lanka is needed to provide a frame of reference to Gooneratne's characters. Sri-Lanka got independence in 1948 and was renamed Sri Lanka in same year. The original name of Sri Lanka was 'Sinhaldwipa', land of the Sinhalese and it was first settled in 6th century BC. Theravada Buddhism, an original form of religion, was arrived from Indian sub-continent due to missionary efforts of the Indian ruler Ashoka. This is the religion of the main protagonist of the novel, Bharat Mangala Devasinha.

From the 16th to 18th century European invaders conquered the Kandyan and Kotte kingdoms and Tamil kingdoms, until Ceylon became a British Crown Colony in 1801. (Peebles 41). All these invaders controlled the population and exploited the export trade. All the European powers - the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British influenced Sri-Lankan economically. They established plantations, converted a large section of society into

Catholicism and created hybrid groups. In Gooneratne's *If the Moon Smiled*, the Perth couple, Johannes and Wilhelmina Breudher refuse their connection with Sri-Lanka, they are part of this hybrid groups. Most significantly the Tamil/Sinhala civil dispute, briefly described in the novel, is responsible for the division of the country into ethnic categories, which generated huge problems for the future.

Both Gooneratne and Lokugé's characters emerge from national identities and are largely different from the Western models of independent states. These colonizing powers try to maintain the centralized control over coming populations from metropolitan centres. Under such circumstances the interests of the Tamils and the Bengalis were vastly overlooked. Such conditions full of conflicts in Sri-Lanka affected the people's concept of identity, culture, home and belonging. The remembered homes of the protagonists in Lokugé's Aruni and Gooneratne's Edward, Bharat and Navaranjini in Sri-Lanka recall their memories even after they are located within different parts of Australia – in Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland and Ballarat. Infact, as Russell West-Pavlov proclaims, 'there is a continuous intersecting, shifting and colliding of cultural boundaries which one could assume is inevitably a part of the migrant condition – 'inside, outside, crisscross, inside out' (2007: 11).

Gooneratne's work *A Change of Skies* portrays the experiences of three generations: Edward who migrates to Australia for five years (1882-1887); his grandson Bharat and his wife Navaranjini, who visit Australia in 1964; and their Australian born daughter Edwina, who returns to Sri-Lanka on a field trip. Edward's journey is in opposite direction, away from the location of cultural ancestry, he comes to Australia by leaving his privileged lifestyle, old house where his had family lived and died. After witnessing the harsh and inhospitable land he decides to return home, to his roots, to the land of his forbears. Here for him Third space represents a return to a place he knows and loves and his 'home' is originally rooted in Sri-Lanka. His perceptions of the people he meets exert a noticeable effect on his sense and he interrogates himself who he is and where does he belong. Edward's journey to Australia enriches him. On his return to homeland, he translates from ancient Sanskrit and Buddhist texts which prove a new perception of cultural plurality. This translation of Edward has been processed in Australia but finalized, which becomes his 'Third Space of Enunciation.'

In case of Edward's grandson, Bharat, this movement into Third Space is a more intricate and doubling process and moves in opposite direction. Bharat and his wife Navaranjini move back to Sri-Lanka after eight years in Australia after realizing even they don't belong to that place. These characters encounter 'plural social identities co-existing and interacting with each Other' (Goh 5). But their arrivals and departures incorporate significant similarities. Their experiences distinctly include the issues of diasporic consciousness like location, dislocation, adaptations, memory, transformations and hybridity in their movements between ancestral and artificial land. The adjustments Bharat makes to do physically, emotionally and psychologically for redefining himself in a new geopolitical place indicates that migrants must make such adjustments for negotiating a new and different sense of belonging. These variations are characterized by the worries and anxieties of placing oneself

in a new land, and adopting new and innovative ways of visualizing oneself, and adjusting oneself within a society in which one lives physically but is in process of acquiring one's original identity. By changing his name and transforming himself into a new translated identity, physically he meets the norms of the people in which he lives but Bharat/Barry in reality loses his relationships and values. On one side he wants to belong to his ancestral origins and on the other hand he moves towards acculturation in this in-between situation he remains 'Other' and this fact he realizes during attending a conference where he is only Asian.

In case of Navaranjini her first move to host land is characterized by long lasting disorientation and intense fears about the new land. Her transition to the Third Space finds smooth negotiation than her husband's. When they return to Colombo she is shocked by the changes, the homeland now has become a foreign land. Her interrogation of the systems of Patriarchy reminds a migrant woman that a migrant female has to negotiate not only with outside world but with the domestic space. When she returns to Colombo with her husband she is intensely shocked by the changes. Now the homeland becomes a foreign land for her and the Australian landscape gets the status of altered reality. In her letters she admits that she actually likes Australians and she wants to maintain friendship with both Australian and Sri Lankan communities. The most important change comes about in her perception of her husband. She remains devoted and loyal to her husband till end. She belongs to Tamil culture that's why she openly challenges reactionary construction of Tamils after the civil war begins. With Jean the Third Space offers new perceptions and visions about associating and being associated to people in the Australian context. In a new place with the opening of her restaurants and publication of cookbooks she asserts her new identity which is hybrid. Her reorientation and relocation does not follow the path of her husband because she does not wish to change her life and traditions. She remains loyal to her husband, her daughter Edwina and keeps retains her faith in Hinduism till the end. She creates a different vision of what it means living in the Third Space.

Edwina is their daughter and she has completed the process of transformation. She is a true representative of this place, culture and space. For Edwina her parents' ancestral land is an alien land for her which she recreates in her memory and stories. Edwina's 'Third Space' perceives to be the hybridized reality of the second generation migrant. She and Aruni know where they come from; both of them have tangible roots in the community and a good knowledge of their ancestral land Sri-Lanka and their heritage. They are always at home in Australia. For Edwina Sri-Lanka is poverty-stricken place damaged by war and controlled by a corrupt government. She strongly feels that wildlife of Sri-Lanka must be reduced almost to extinction and the family home in the Walauwa must have fallen into decay. She realizes that she has no real emotional attachment for parents' homeland. For such characters there are no memories, no recollections, attachments to locations and people in the old countries. All their memories are firmly grounded in Australia and Australian culture. For them visiting to their parents' homeland means learning a language and taking field trips which in turn is another translation in their own Third Space.

At the end of his visit to Australia Edward, in *A Change of Skies* takes help of a Buddhist text to give voice to his intuition: 'Subject to change are all component things' (239) and his grandson Bharat comes to similar understanding: 'We do not choose the moments of departure or settlement, we are chosen by them. And also those moments, once they have touched us, make us different persons from the persons we were before, and place ceases to matter' (152).

The poet Horace (cited in Gooneratne's novel) articulates that despite a 'change of skies' individual remains unchanged, is radically subverted, in the experiences of all protagonists of these novels. For all these diasporic people in these Gooneratne and Lokugé's novels, Third Space includes changed identities because their homes, their situations and their lives are totally changed. The central dilemma of the nomadic subject is stated by Alan Lawson in his seminal essay, 'The Discovery of Nationality in Australian and Canadian Literature is': 'Who am I when I am transported?' (Lawson 168) can be a critical interrogation for all migrants, in case of the migrants from Asian countries who resettle into the European culture of white Australia. The concept of hybridization for them becomes an ongoing process. Their constant movement across cultural and geographical marginalities, the formation and reformation of identities, emphasizes the process of transformation involved.

Turtle Nest is the second novel by Sri Lankan born writer Chandani Lokugé. It explores issues of mimicry and diasporic longing with critical explorations of nostalgia and its effects. It is a tragic story as her first novel, *If the Moon Smiled*. It portrays the life of fishing village in Sri Lanka. This provides an appealing setting for western tourists. *Turtle Nest*, Mala takes the central position and she is daughter of a Sri-Lankan fishing family. She lives in great poverty with great beauty. Mala gets attracted by the catholic religion along with her sensual desires. Mala is finally destroyed by her physical demands and her devotion for religion and family. After disappearance of Mala's character, her female child Aruni comes forward to learn her mother's story. Aruni is adopted and brought up by a Sri-Lankan family who migrated to Australia. Now Aruni's search starts for her actual home and she focuses on chronic conditions of migrants and exile. Aruni unties the tight threads of past in which Simon, a family friend of her mother, helps her. *Turtle Nest* explores the Aruni's own life story, her early memories in Sri-Lanka and her new experiences in Australia which bring her back to Sri-Lanka for finding the truth about her mother Mala and her birth place. Lokugé's novel *If the Moon Smiled* juxtaposes Sri-Lanka and Australia, known for rural and urban status, dominating men and submissive wife, conservative children parents and rebellious. This is the first expatriate novel which deals with the problems of bringing up of children in Sri-Lanka. The story is moving through the eyes of Manthri, she is a mother with shattered happiness and peace of mind. Her two children Devaka and Nelum emigrate to Australia, but due to the imposed desperation of parents on their children, their life lead to disaster. As a result Devaka becomes a drug addict and Nelum loses interest in her aging parents. Lokugé convincingly portrays the disturbed and tensed expatriate living. In the first section of the novel, Manthri is a little girl and use to go to village temple. After attaining adolescence she begins to develop romantic desires for her family servant. The concluding part of the novel turns to the complexities in the life of an expatriate woman, who has a

breakdown, jagged and fragmented experience. This condition /strategy is appropriate which illustrates Manthri's mental illness and fragmented family on which "the moon never smiled" (29). If the moon smiled "end in displacement, rupture and violence both at domestic and public levels"(249). Lokugé who lives in Australia so this displacement causes her to visualize her native home as a place of fracture. In this novel Australia creates another set of problems which destroys Manendra's family. The ancient civilization and culture of Sri-Lanka has failed to provide a sense of security for survival. Under such conditions, migration is an unavoidable recourse for them though in long run it results in "desiccation and disintegration" (6).

Here the turtle metaphor can be seen as an allegory of the nation in which baby turtles of Sri-Lankan body politic are dismembered by eagle talons and fractured by war and global powers. Turtle Nest explores the problems of diasporic nostalgia and its connection to touristic gullibility as experienced by Aruni, Mala's daughter and focuses on the orientalist discourse that is provided in Sri-Lanka's elite hotels in Colombo by upholding master-servant dynamics between local workers and foreign customers. She is, like Lokugé's, concerned with spectacle of neocolonialism. In this novel Lokugé evokes both the sedition and the violence of migration. The novel opens with a turtle hatchling yearning toward the safety of the sea, yet grasped by an eagle in flight depicted by Aruni who returns to Sri-Lanka to find her roots. Through Aruni's story of return and discovery, Lokugé explores both the temptations and torments of belonging to places and people.

Lokugé explores diasporic nostalgia and its connection to touristic gullibility as experienced by Aruni, Mala's daughter. Aruni is born and brought up since the age of eight in Australia by an elite Sinhalese couple so her impressions and experiences of the beach are complicated and hard to absorb for her. The beach boys "surreptitiously call her kalu suddhi. It means black-white woman" (72-73). She hears all this but becomes ignorant. She is determined to stake her claim in their culture. Aruni's strong association with her past culture binds her tightly to the shocking and disgusting realities of the beach boys' world. She visualizes the existence of beach boys in an exotic way and behaves as a naïve among the beach people. Her ignorance, naivety and care free attitude is the outcome of her diasporic nostalgia, her refined Australian upbringing and her prestigious job as a tourist in Sri-Lanka.

Gooneratne was intimately connected with the distinguished Bandaranaike family who dominated Sri-Lankans socially as well as politically for several decades even after Sri-Lanka (then Ceylon) got freedom from the British in 1948. The upper class Sri-Lankans even after getting independence, used to send their children to British Universities like Oxford and Cambridge. Her novel *A Change of Skies* is an informative work, can be categorized as a social anthropological study focusing on a class of early Sri-Lankan immigrants even after their migration to Australia. All the protagonists of Gooneratne have long established connection with the Great Britain: "For generations my relatives had been either going to, or returning from, England. And so firmly had their gaze been focused on the metropolitan centre of a pale pink emporium that they had never so much as glanced in any other direction. For about England, of course, like the rest of my family, I knew everything" (1991:12).

Though her characters have in depth knowledge of Great Britain, its rich literary traditions but they don't have firsthand experience of Australia. It depicts when the main protagonist Bharat decides to move as a result of an academic posting to Southern Cross University and he tries to recall his knowledge of Australia. His understanding of Australia is confined up to the photographs of Australian animals, cricket, Don Bradman, Bondi beach and Aborigines. For Bharat these Australian images have been the part of a huge geographical location and on whole as a part of the British ownership of Asia. Gooneratne's projection of Australia through Sri-Lankan eyes depicts not only familiarity with England and the dog-like devotion to the Empire:

The word "Australia" summoned up in my mind a single picture, one which I instantly recognized as having come straight out of the Philip's Atlas I had used as a schoolboy at Royal. On Philip's map of the world, huge areas of the earth's surface had broken out in the rash of washed-out pink patches which denoted British ownership. To the east of India and the island of Ceylon (also pink), south of Borneo and Sarawak. That doggy devotion to Britain is something that I, familiar with the colonial traditions of my own family." (1991: 11-12)

Identity transformation starts with changing name of Bharat to Barry and Navaranjini to Jean. In the act of assimilation into the host culture. Australians swiftly trim their lengthy proper nouns and hence Mangala Davasinha (Bharat) becomes Mangala Day and finally Mundy, thus eliminating the ancestral sense and flavor of their original names. But on the other hand, there is another Sri-Lankan Koyakos, who rejects to assimilate into the new culture. He loves to be recognized by his full Sri-Lankan name, the pompous sounding Mekaboru Kiyanahati Balapan Koyako.

A Change of Skies depicts the outcomes of both historical continuity and irrepressible change with Australian nationalism and cultural privilege. History acts as a hard living force Barry unhesitatingly accepts the change and new culture rather than resisting it and takes a sound stand in a fragmented and alienated world of human interactions. Gooneratne's *A Change of Skies* reflects her anxiety about the impact of change on an authentic writing practice and focus on treatment of assimilation and identity crisis.

Both these novels approach expatriate experience in different ways. Gooneratne deals with theme seriously. In the beginning she describes the misconceptions and misunderstandings the protagonists have about the host country. Protagonist's knowledge and understanding of Australia is based on a poster in a Geography class, the land of Kangaroos, on the frontiers of the civilized world. They perceive their trip to Australia as a temporary exile. Even Bharat's sister warns them: "You'll be miserable. There's nothing there but Koalas and Kangaroos. And, the white Australian policy?"(61) In fact the political and social unrest in their native lands pushed them out to host land. Acculturation or adoption of external changes begins from the very beginning but assimilation or "the ability to react instinctively or emotionally to a culture is a far slower process" (Dhawan: 152). Shedding off

one's own identity and ethnicity and adsorbing into a new culture is the only way to survive in the host land, is the suggestion by both novels. For Jean and Barry's daughter "is allowed to grow up in a new country, free of the burdens of the past" (321).

Gooneratne and Chandani Lokugé's works explore the notions of diaspora, hybridity and transcultural negotiation with humour and irony. Their novels are a portrayal of early Sri-Lankan migrants, their socio-economic status, and their connection with the British Empire as a journey between colonial and national borders. Chandani Lokugé's first novel *If the Moon Smiled* (2000), explores the unhappy marriage and generational conflict within an expatriate family living in Australia through the wife or mother's point of view. And her next novel *Turtle Nest* deals with the problematic intercultural associations and identities. It explores the dominance of Western influence in Sri Lankan tourist economy.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this research paper has been a comparative study of three novels by two Sri Lankan-Australian female writers—Yasmine Gooneratne and Chandani Lokugé—who explore the issues of diaspora—location, re-location, loss, nostalgia, accommodation within the Australian context through the diasporic experiences of their protagonists. This study has explored that the adaptation to the Third Space is more intricate with the variety of differences occurring in the first and second generation migrants. The female writers selected for detailed study seem to set up structures to construct the result of human experience of migration. The experiences of these characters are literary representations of diasporic people who remain in the constant motion. They are relentlessly creating and recreating, producing and reproducing, assembling and reassembling their identities in the multidimensional Third Space. And at last, I would like to recite one of the popular lines of *A Change of Skies*: "Until we choose where we shall settle, and decide (in our own time) to make ourselves known, displaced people such as ourselves enjoy a liberty that others may well envy" (Gooneratne 281).

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