

This dissertation is a transcultural feminist and postcolonial study of the life narratives (auto/biographies) of late Twentieth Century South and Southeast Asian diasporic academic women in America. It is delimited to Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* (1989) and *Boys Will Be Boys* (2003), Meena Alexander's *Fault Lines* (2003), Shirley Lim's *Among the White Moon Faces* (1997), and Bharati Mukherjee's *Days and Nights in Calcutta* (1977). Located on a larger scale in Asian American literary tradition and focused on life narratives written by diasporic women, this investigation is in the area of Autobiography Studies.

The main argument of this study is that, through their construction of relational, hybrid, multiple, and shifting subjectivities/identities in their life narratives, diasporic academic women not only challenge the male autobiography writing conventions but also question and subvert the universalist assumptions of the White Euro-American/Western feminism. This dissertation also argues that, operating from their hybrid viewing positions as academics and making a creative use of their agency as intellectuals, the Asian-American diasporic women in America use their life narratives to disrupt postcolonial polarities and make the imaginary liminal space between home and host cultures a productive site for diasporic articulations. Moreover, this dissertation investigates how they put up with the demands of their intellectual lives and motherhood, and brave the odds stacked against them in their patriarchal native societies and race-/gender-conscious American society and academy. Since they leave their homes, this study particularly investigates how their concept of home changes across time and space.

Their experience of straddling two different cultures simultaneously develops in them a sense of be/longing or un/belonging, cultural nostalgia as well as a tendency to assimilate, the degrees of which vary from person to person. Due to their marriages with white North Americans, their distinguished positions as academics in American universities, and multiple migrations, their concept of home changes from ordinary to imaginary, static to portable, and from singular to plural, constructed through writing. It is through disrupting male autobiography writing practice, questioning the First World feminism, energizing the "intervening space" between cultures, and overturning the traditional postcolonial binaries that South and Southeast Asian diasporic academic women in America problematize and nuance contemporary production of feminist and postcolonial/diasporic knowledge