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The Benefits of Loss: Life Strategies and Negotiations of Identity Amongst Indian Transmigrants in Melbourne, Australia

Diplomová práce

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Prohlášení

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Abstrakt

Má magisterská práce Přínosné ztráty: Životní strategie a vyjednávání identity mezi indickými transmigranty v australském Melbourne je studií komunity transmigrantů pocházejících převážně z Indie, kteří se rozhodli imigrovat do Melbourne v Austrálii. Většina těchto osob se do Austrálie dostala skrze víza vydávaná zahraničním studentům (overseas student visa) za účelem absolvování vysokoškolského vzdělání, což jim později otevřelo cestu skrze program australské vlády The General Skilled Migration k získání trvalého pobytu v Austrálii. Tento migrační proud jedinců s odborným vyšším vzděláním je v posledním desetiletí podporován imigrační politikou Austrálie, jakožto reakce na zvýšenou mobilitu populace v rámci globalizovaného světa. Tato studie se zabývá jednáním v rámci úseků života konkrétních jedinců, na jejichž příkladě se snaží ukázat zmíněné globální trendy. Ve středu zájmu diplomové práce stojí sociální síť 14 přátel, kteří vytvářejí transnacionální komunitu v Melbourne, jejich motivace k migraci, vyprávění o prožitcích procesu migrace, strategie života v teritoriu cizího národního státu a každodenní vyjednávání individuální i kolektivní identity.

My thesis The Benefits of Loss: Life Strategies and Negotiations of Identity amongst Indian Transmigrants in Melbourne, Australia is a study of a community of transmigrants of prevailingly Indian origin who immigrated to Melbourne Australia. The majority of these persons came to Australia on overseas student visas in order to pursue a university education; this later created an opportunity for them to obtain permanent residency in Australia through The General Skilled Migration program. This specific migration flow of persons with high skill and education has been supported by the Australian government in the last decade as a reaction to the increased mobility of population in the globalized world. The study focuses on the life strategies and negotiations of particular individuals attempting to show how these global trends are mediated in specific stages of their lives. At the centre of my interest lies a social network of 14 friends who constitute a transnational community in Melbourne, their motivations of migration, the stories capturing their experiences of the migration process, life strategies in the territory of a foreign nation-state and everyday negotiations of both individual and collective identity.

Klíčová slova: studijní víza (overseas student visa) a profesní (General Skilled Migration) migrace do Austrálie, transnacionalismus, transmigranti, nacionalismus, identita

Key words: Overseas student visa and The General Skilled migration to Australia, transnationalism, transmigrants, nationalism, identity

1. Introduction: Crisscrossing Chennai, Dubai, London, Melbourne, Mumbai and Prague

The distance between Chennai, India, where Rahul grew up, and Melbourne, Australia, is 5,455 miles, 8,779 kilometres, or 4,740 nautical miles. These numbers come from a distance calculator which measures the straight line between two points. If one could drive on this straight line from Melbourne to Chennai, it would take 99 hours and 11 minutes with the average speed of 88.5 km/hr. For most people it takes approximately 10 hours and 55 minutes to travel by aircraft between their places of departure and arrival, plus of course the additional hours of waiting at airports between check-ins, departures, arrivals, security and customs. Airports are transitory voids, filled with the syncopation of footsteps and collages of fleeting conversations. They are non-places pervaded by an ear-splitting cacophony of engines, spaces defined by the artificial light coming from fluorescent lamps above – airports are the lack of sun. The artificial air inside seems thickened and stewed from hours spent waiting for everything and nothing.

Rahul would rather sit like everybody else, immobile and waiting for his departure back to Australia, but a person behind the counter murmurs about the appearance of his passport. They tell him he is unable to fly due to the miserable condition of his travel document. He knows this is not true; he has travelled "half" of the world with the very same passport he holds in his hand; if it wasn't for the greedy fingers of the airport employees hoping for a stack of bank notes adorned with the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, he would had already checked in his luggage. Not willing to pay the bribe, he wanders from office to office, eventually coming to sluggish official who glances at him disdainfully, then returns to fixing the collar buttons of his shirt. Rahul tries to ignore him but he knows that this is India, a disparate country where different norms apply. The many minutes seem like decades, but finally the man lets him go, flashing paan reddened teeth in his oily smile. To erase the event from his mind Rahul pictures Nandita, his fiancé he had met only a few days ago, and the thought of her softens his heart.

(Nonfictional literary representation of Rahul's journey to India in 2008–2009.)

The beginnings and ends of various texts are better understood as arbitrary referential points. They refer to the contents and emplotment of pieces while construing what we then perceive as approximately closed or open beginnings and ends. Nevertheless, these mechanisms of demarcation in stories are still arbitrary, and so every author stands before these choices – whether he or she is consciously aware of this or not. With this specific understanding in my mind, I let the "story"[1] of this thesis symbolically begin at the airport and within the process of transition using a literary nonfictional example of my informant Rahul's return to Melbourne in the beginning of 2009.

Melbourne City Center. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

I first heard this story from Rahul on March 6, 2009, in the beginning of my ethnographic fieldwork in Melbourne. Earlier that day, Sahil returned from his family visit in Bombay[2]. Sahil made plans to reunite with Dhruv and Vivek at their flat on Lygon Street in the Northern Suburbs of Melbourne, where Rahul also stayed at the time. It was the first occasion we met after the Australian university summer break, the traditional, annular period of visiting our homelands. When Sahil and I arrived, Rahul

[1] I speak about a story, a narrative, for this thesis does not claim to abandon specific rhetorical devices but at the same time attempts to use them in a conscious, reflexive manner (for details see chapter 3).

[2] In this thesis, I partly use the older colonial names of the cities since my informants generally preferred address these places in such manner – Mumbai was always referred to as Bombay (an exception constituted Chennai, which was referred to as Chennai not Madras). With titles of the chapters, I leave the contemporary official titles of places for two reasons: 1) from the respect of the official titles 2) as stylistic device Mumbai to Melbourne sounds in a sense better than Bombay to Melbourne. However, in the text, the names are used with respect to my informants' everyday use of the language.

was still the only one there. Sahil and Rahul began a passionate conversation about their recent airport experiences. Sahil complained about an Indian taxi driver who tried to start a conversation with him aboard the aircraft. Sahil disregarded him; he considered taxi drivers ignorant. The taxi driver then turned to another passenger and asked: Was he a farmer? At this point in the story both Rahul and Sahil burst into laughter. At the time I couldn't fully understand. Rahul shared his experience of Dubai airport and expressed disapproval over the head veils that women wore there. He spoke of his concerns of being mistaken for a terrorist, and then remembered the story of his airport harassment in India… Thus, I begin this thesis symbolically, with these little remarks on travel, all to emphasize the process of motion, the individual journeys, as people move across various physical and ideological terrains within the larger processes of migration.

This thesis represents and offers an interpretation of my informants' life strategies during their immigrant experience in Melbourne, Australia. It also inevitably includes my own experience, for the representations offered are based on my observations and explained from my particular point of view. This thesis focuses on the core of a social network of young transmigrants in Melbourne observed for four months in early 2009. I comprehend this social network as composed of mutually shared friendships, reciprocal support and periodic face-to-face encounters – a social unit I propose to call the *community of affection*. Thus, when faced with the dilemma of choosing my research sample, I sought to respect the observed situation. I decided to centre the research sample around my gatekeeper and best informant Sahil, and from him I allocated 13 other research participants who formed his closest social circles at that point. The majority of the allocated informants were male of Indian origin; while others came from elsewhere. I find such research focus advantageous as the situation shows us that important alliances are and can be built across the boundaries of national, ethnic or other prescribed identities. A common motive for moving to Australia for most my informants was the opportunity to obtain a higher education linked to an accessible student visa. Due to their student experiences, many of these young professionals could after the completion of their studies attempt to acquire first permanent residency, and later citizenship through the Skilled Migrant Visa program. Some of my informants decided to make use of this opportunity; fewer chose to return to their homelands.

Regardless of their choices, many of them move ceaselessly between both the physical and social spaces of two or more nation-states.

In the main focus of this thesis lie the life strategies of young transmigrants of prevailingly Indian origin and the ways in which they accommodate themselves in the host country. It follows their vibrant transnational lives, negotiations of their everyday identities as well as other contexts: political, ideological, and the means of technology which have allowed these individual translocations. I seek to explore the emergence of transnational identities on an everyday level as contested by the policies of two different nation-states, negotiations of the loyalties to these political entities and making sense of individual identity under the conditions of this ideological gap. I will also attempt to depict the individual experiences of the migration through "migration stories," for the thoughts and experiences of migration are often verbalized in stories. Also, when I speak about the individual experiences, I partly refer to the processes of the human mind resting close to what we generally call feelings – emotions. In this thesis, I will comprehend and theorize emotions as part of a discursive practice following Abu-Lughod's course (see Abu Lughod, 1990: 27). In this study, coming from the example of the everyday life struggles and negotiations of my informants, I ask: What happens to one's identity when one physically leaves the familiar behind in order to replace it with the "unknown" while dreaming of "better lives"? How do those who move experience departure, migration, and settlement? What does one experience when he or she packs up a certain portion of his or her possessions, or if the bags are packed by the mother (as in the case of Sahil), and when after arrival do these objects become actual material representations of the "old life"? Who moves, who stays behind and what are the motivations and decisions behind the individual translocation? How are the new "homes" devised, and what "homes" are actually created? How do people create social networks and connections in a new place? How and on what levels do they maintain connections with their countries of origin? Finally, how do we comprehend the migrant experience under the conditions of social and temporal change? However, before I more closely elaborate on my informants' lives in motion, I find it necessary to introduce my own journey, a passage that facilitated my unique experience and comprehension of migration recounted in this thesis.

In the beginning of July 2008 I left my homeland, the Czech Republic, to temporarily live and study in Australia on the Higher Education Visa. By doing so, I obtained a new status within the Australian territory – the status of temporary immigrant. Through this journey and through my bodily experience of migration, I encountered anxieties that other immigrants are likely to face. I was forced to renegotiate my existing identity that was increasingly and more physically becoming transnational. In Australia, from the perspective of both the home society and majority of other immigrants, I began to embody the exotic Other. My status of temporary immigrant and my student visa became determinants in the process of defining my position within the host society. Thus, by the time I started my research project for this thesis, I was already aware of the somehow reversed position I found myself in. Within the history of the social anthropology, the Other is commonly perceived as the one being studied. The Other emerges as other when the standpoint of the researcher is given a certain privilege; but in a less biased point of view, the Other perceives the researcher at least as other, as different as the researcher perceives the Other. Therefore, in the beginning of my research, with these thoughts and ideas in mind, I started to wonder about my own position in this new country of dwelling, about the theoretical distinctions in contrast to the day-to-day interactions made between me and the people who later became my informants, and lastly, the boundaries of the ethnographic field in a city that was increasingly transnational.

James Clifford has noted in his article 'Traveling Cultures' that since the 1920s, participant observation has been viewed by some as a sort of "mini-immigration" (Clifford, 1992: 99). Within the discipline of social anthropology, the researcher has commonly undertaken research expeditions that include physical dislocation and the consequent processes of obtaining a certain degree of understanding and establishing oneself in the locality studied. Clifford elaborates on this aspect closer when he writes: *'The fieldworker is "adopted," "learns" the culture and the language. The field is home away from home, a place of dwelling. This dwelling includes work and growth, the development of both personal and "cultural" competence. Ethnographers, typically are travelers who like to stay and dig in (for a time), who like to make a second home/workplace. Unlike other travelers who prefer to pass through a series of locations, most anthropologists are homebodies abroad. The field as spatial practice is*

thus a specific style, quality, and duration of dwelling.' (Clifford, 1992: 99) Clifford's powerful emphasis of the physical movement and the researcher's positionality in the field proved to be an interesting framework for theorizing identity in an increasingly globally interconnected world of movement, in which both the anthropologists and research participants meet as more or less temporary immigrants.

What makes Clifford's description of an anthropologist in the field outlined above truly remarkable is that it is not very far from a position of transnational immigrants I have met during my stay in Melbourne. Like me, they also felt the urge to negotiate the norms and conventions of the host country, and they often needed to improve their language competencies as the English language is locally quite diverse. Similar to anthropologists, these young transmigrants came as "travelers" who intended on staying longer and in a sense made Australia their second home/workplace. In Melbourne, Australia, both my informants and I were approximately in the beginnings of our journeys; we were immigrants within a host territory, and we were all the Other, at least from the point of view of the Australian immigration law. Under such conditions, and ever since the beginning of my research, the distinctions between me and "the Other" in a sense of classical anthropology increasingly blurred. That is when I began to wonder about classical fieldwork guidelines and the discipline's definition, which I elaborate on in greater detail in Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this study.

My newly gained immigrant status also determined the topic of this thesis. In Melbourne, Australia, from my point of view, immigrants were more likely to socialize with immigrants, partly due to city's spatial ethnic segregation and inner class divisions. Soon enough, the majority of people I socialized with and had a good chance to cooperate with were immigrants. The immigrants living in Melbourne shared a universal experience of migration as of a physical movement and the struggles of life in a foreign country. Perhaps, this feeling or a sentiment of a certain "emotional homelessness" interconnects people across the wide socio-historical differences that would otherwise serve as marks of distinction – in other words, across the notional national and ethnic boundaries. Under these circumstances I have become increasingly involved with the topic of migration on an academic level. In a sense, the topic of migration became my own in three different ways: through my particular bodily experience, through sharing this experience and "migration stories" with my informants

and lastly on an academic level; in ethnographic fieldwork and the consequent process of writing. Nevertheless, it was through my ethnographic fieldwork and the writing process that I began to understand both my own and my informants' experience within a larger socio-historical context. In this thesis I touch on all three of these aspects, emphasizing the second and third. I take some of the suggestions made by reflexive anthropology that claims to take the positionality of the researcher seriously (see the second and third chapters of this thesis). In its content, this thesis encompasses both the "migration stories" of my informants and partly also my own. When I say stories, I mean narratives, but not strictly in terms of "narrative interviews" – narratives as means of a universal form of communication, a medium capable of conveying movement (both physical and temporal), and means of expression of one's identity (see Chapter 2).

Considering the previous text, one could say that the "story" of my fieldwork begins somewhere in the middle of my immigrant experience. In mid-February 2009 I returned to Melbourne to conduct ethnographic fieldwork for this thesis. Because my best informant was then in India for vacation, I bought a ticket with a two week long stopover in Bombay. On the evening of departure, I was sat silently at the Prague airport, listening to an iPod while waiting to board the plane. Silver, feathery snowflakes were "dancing with the wind" behind the glass windows as the famous Bollywood song *Main Agar Kahoon* resonated in my ears. I envisioned the magical sequence from the song's video clip in which miniature dancers in a snow globe turn into the lead actors – Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone – and dance in falling "snow." Somehow this imagery grew to represent the peculiarity of my translocation from the humid icy grays of Prague's winter, through the cosmopolitan, transitional vibe of London's Heathrow airport until I walked outside about eight hours later to embrace the dusty, sweaty, noisy streets of Bombay. About a week later I flew to Goa, and in a few days back again to Bombay. Not long after that I departed India in for Australia, where I lived at the time, walking the airports of Adelaide and Sydney for hours before reaching my final destination – Tullamarine airport in Melbourne. And it was precisely this journey that allowed me to participate in the conversation with Sahil and Rahul that I related earlier. Where else, but the airport (the transitory "non-places" as Marc Augé has proposed them to be) should the story of this thesis symbolically begin and in a sense end (see Augé, 1999: 109-110)? On the move, and on a journey, following

Clifford's appeal that we make a note of the travel and the technologies which enable our journeys and suggest interconnectedness of various places around the globe (see Clifford, 1992: 99-100) – moving in an ephemeral moment of departure, with the glimpses of our own thoughts that have prodded us into this journey.

2. On Methodological Standpoints, Theoretical Perspectives and the Style of Writing

I first traveled to Australia in mid-July 2008 to study at the University of Melbourne for one academic semester and to carry out fieldwork for my master's degree thesis in Social Anthropology. I started preparing my research project several months before the departure. This was a different project focusing mainly on Australian citizens. My original research concerned with the anthropology of food and consumption in relation to the notions of transnationalism and the processes of establishing one's identity in a suburban environment of Melbourne's upper middle class. Although the project seemed well-planned (I even had a couple of potential informants), in the end it failed due to time restrictions and the struggle to create a circle of informants. This was in part due to planning the research project in the Czech Republic when Melbourne remained unfamiliar to me. After six months of successful studies with the leading Australian University, I was still returning home without a satisfying sample of data for the research project. However, not every failure is necessarily a loss – some defeats hide small "victories" yet to be discovered. As I sat on the plane flying home, meditating on the unfulfilled project, I felt I had failed as an anthropology student. It was then, aboard the aircraft in the beginning of 2009, when I realized I had another project in front of me the whole time without recognizing it: a research project about a group of young Indian immigrants I became familiar with during my stay in Melbourne. What I didn't know was that I would be granted the opportunity to study in Melbourne for a second semester. In mid-February 2009, I returned to Melbourne with a new research project and a two week stopover in Bombay, where I visited Sahil.

Sahil and I met by chance at a social event organized by a student union during the orientation week at the *University of Melbourne* in late July 2008. We became friends instantly and spent an increasing amount of time together attending various social events or taking coffee breaks at the university campus (except Sahil generally drank hot chocolate). At the time, Sahil worked at the university as a tutor teaching BPA (Business Process Analysis) and I was an international student. As time passed, Sahil and I grew closer and met almost daily. Throughout these months I was introduced

to his friends, whose company I enjoyed and whom I began to perceive as my friends as well. After several months of knowing each other Sahil and I drifted into a relationship. By the time I returned to Melbourne, Sahil and I were officially in a relationship and the majority of my informants-to-be were my friends. Under these circumstances, when I became interested in the migration stories of these individuals on an academic level, I also felt a strong urge to reconsider several theoretical and methodological concepts in social anthropology. My questions didn't only concern my intimate relationship with Sahil and the friendships I made; more importantly I became increasingly curious about the concept of the "field," the delimitation of locality in global terrains and the concepts of "culture" and "nationhood" within the phenomenon of international migration. The following contemplations of theoretically methodological character attempt to answer these various questions I have encountered in my anthropological endeavors.

2.1. The Field as "Home Away From Home"

In the introduction to this thesis, I alluded to Clifford's article 'Traveling Cultures' in which he proposes to redefine the discipline of anthropology regarding travel (Clifford, 1992: 96-112). I have already briefly outlined his comprehension of the participant observation as of "mini-migration" and positionality of the ethnographer/ anthropologist in terms of both physical and intellectual movement – travel (or journey as I suggest) (see Clifford, 1992: 99). His motives for redefining the discipline of travel stems from the critique of the notion of field as a stationary place of stationary people into which the anthropologist can translocate him or herself in a fairly unproblematic manner (Clifford, 1992: 98-101). As Clifford explains, the localizing tendencies of peoples and cultures and consequently the anthropologist partly originate from centering the "culture" in the locus of typically the village (with classical example of Malinowski's tent pitched nearby the chief's hut in *Omarakana* village on Trobriand Islands) (Clifford, 1992: 98). The "village" was understood as a place, where the "natives" live – a typified example of the "cultural" whole and where the informant's identity is reduced to the category of a "native" through a set of localizing strategies in terms of "clearly bounded" subject-societies, traditions, communities, or identities (Clifford, 1992: 97, 98). Considering my own experience, along with Clifford (Clifford, 1992) I argue that this "classic" concept of the field is highly problematic; both the field

and anthropologist's presence in the field remain unexplained as if they weren't relevant within the context of the research. Moreover, such comprehension of the field allows the type of preconceived localization of both the "natives" and the anthropologist in terms of time and place. Yet, what precisely is this thing we call "locality," and what is "culture" in transnational cityscapes in which both the researcher and research participants meet as immigrants?

Deriving a definition of a "field" in terms of enclosed, standalone villages that represent examples of the "cultural whole" is, of course, a great illusion, since such comprehension of a place tends to reduce the important contexts including regional, national, transnational as well as social change. Clifford suggests that: '*In the history of twentieth-century anthropology, "informants" first appear as natives; they emerge as travelers*.' (Clifford, 1992: 97) According to Clifford, informants embody a specific mixture of these two roles, they rarely remain entirely localized or static, and similarly to the anthropologist, they often have their own interesting histories of travel (Clifford, 1992: 97). In this respect, following Clifford's proposal, I suggest considering the "field" as a locality of "dwelling, a home away from home" emerging as "both methodological ideal and a concrete place of professional activity" defined "a site of displacement dwelling and productive work" (Clifford, 1992: 99, 100).

Thus, redefining the field in terms of a place of professional activity allows comprising both translocal and virtual terrains without the necessity of limiting the scope to one locality. Moreover, the understanding of the "field" in terms of "home" helps to diminish the differences made between the "native" and the Other – in such a field the researcher and research participants tend to emerge more likely as "allies," "neighbors," and "friends." In the "field" redefined in these terms, new plurality arises – the anthropologist no longer disposes the monopoly to knowledge, instead as Gupta and Fergusson suggest: '*Rather than viewing anthropologists as possessing unique knowledge and insights that they can then share with or put to work for various "ordinary people," our approach insists that anthropological knowledge coexists with other forms of knowledge*' (Gupta and Fergusson, 1997a: 39). In this manner I began to understand my presence in Melbourne – "home away from home" that also became the central locality of my fieldwork endeavors.

Finally, what we understand by a particular "field" is inevitably the anthropologist's intellectual construct. In this sense, each anthropologist conceives of his or her "field" and becomes on a theoretical level its constituting element; without an anthropologist, there is no "field." Moreover, anthropologist's presence in the "field" leads to what Rabinow has described as "double mediation" of the data (Rabinow, 1977: 119). Rabinow argues that as the researcher enters what is defined as the "field," the "field" itself changes (Rabinow, 1977: 119). He explains: '*The anthropologist creates a doubling of consciousness. Therefore, anthropological analysis must incorporate two facts: first, that we ourselves are historically situated through the questions we ask and the manner in which we seek to understand and experience the world; and second, that what we receive from our informants are interpretations, equally mediated by history and culture. Consequently, the data we collect is doubly mediated, first by our own presence and then by the second-order self-reflection we demand from our informants*' (Rabinow, 1977: 119). Thus, everything we observe, who we encounter and who we talk to needs to be perceived as mutually mediated by both the socio-historical contexts of the researcher and the research participants. Through revealing these contexts, one can present a more complete picture of the studied phenomenon. Moreover, the self-reflexivity of the researcher often leads to a deeper understanding of the field and explains the setting and "ambiance" of the particular research. It reveals the researcher's position in the field – both its benefits and its limitations.

2.2. Communities of Affection – The Localization of the Research Subjects

As I suggested earlier, the possibility of entering what I redefined in terms of the "field" in my case was determined and mediated through developing friendship with Sahil. It was Sahil who introduced me to his closest friends and through whom I entered the social life of the group I came to study. Sahil and his friends were a mixed group of mainly fresh master's degree university graduates; they were in their mid-twenties, and had come to Australia through overseas student visas in order to live and study in Melbourne, primarily in the field of business and economics. By the time I have conducted my research, most of these people held permanent residency in Australia (PR) and had initiated their career lives. Out 14 research participants I have allocated (including Sahil), 8 were Indian nationals, 1 was an Australian Citizen of Indian origin

(with roots in various parts of India), and 5 other people were of diverse backgrounds: a Frenchwoman, a Mauritian man, a Singaporean woman, a Thai woman and Turkish man (9 males and 5 females). The majority of my informants came from relatively well-established and financially secure families of middle class and upper class backgrounds, whose parents encouraged their children to obtain higher education abroad.

When I begin my fieldwork in February 2009, Sahil's overall support proved to be particularly important as he has often took the role of negotiator between me and other members of the community. I first felt uncertain about obtaining informed consent and necessary cooperation from every person I had hoped to work with. When I confessed this to Sahil, he allayed my worry, reminding me that I was amongst friends and if he would ask, surely no one would refuse. Under these circumstances Sahil soon became (apart from being my friend and my partner) my key-informant and my gate keeper. In is in this respect, my research sample began to develop around Sahil and in my perspective was inevitably linked to him as a person. When I stood in front of the choice of my research sample, I decided to respect and embrace this situation, and Sahil became my theoretical standpoint in terms of localization of my informants. Thus, what I perceive as the "core" of the actual social network of young immigrants in Melbourne are the closest friends of my best informant Sahil. This particular social network of friends is derived from Sahil and it represents his individual perspective within his own migration experience, and needs to be comprehended in these terms. I would go as far as to say that if I derived a similar social network from any other research participants, such a network would differ to lesser or greater extent. Still, this cannot be perceived as a drawback, since this situation corresponds with the complexity of everyday life social interactions. This strategy allowed me to physically localize the research subjects in time and space in a highly mobile and changing environment of transnational social networks. The advantage of this approach is that the research sample is not limited to preconceived, theory-derived categories such as culture, ethnicity, race, gender, etc. Instead I focus on existing social relations and constitutions of groups in primarily terms of Appadurai's notion of *neighborhoods* (see Appadurai, 1996: 178, 179), on which I expand through establish a concept of *communities of affection*.

Appadurai characterizes locality as follows: '*I view locality as primarily relational and contextual rather that as scalar or spatial. I see it as a complex*

phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of context. This phenomenological quality, which expresses itself in certain kinds of agency, sociality, and reproducibility, is the main predicate of locality as a category (or subject) that I seek to explore. In contrast, I use the term neighborhood to refer to the actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realized. Neighborhoods, in this usage, are situated communities characterized by their actuality, whether spatial or virtual, and their potential for social reproduction' (Appadurai, 1996: 178-185). Appadurai's comprehension of locality is theoretically viable mainly for two reasons: it deterritorializes locality and can therefore be applied in transnational studies, and at the same time it dismisses the implications of social actors rooted in particular localities, "ethnicities" and "cultures" (cf. Malkki's issue, Malkki, 1992). Through his concept of *neighborhood*, Appadurai avoids limiting the research scope to ethnic, cultural or national boundaries; *neighborhood* emphasizes actual social interconnections between individuals regardless of their national backgrounds or the physical spaces they inhabit (see Appadurai, 1996: 178-199).

Also, Alejandro Portes strongly calls for something other than individual units of analysis when he says: "*Reducing everything to the individual plane would unduly constrain the enterprise by preventing the utilization of more complex units of analysis – families, households, and communities, as the basis for explanation and prediction*" (Portes, 1997: 817). As I will show later in the body of this thesis, the social network I examine constitutes a basis of a community of young immigrant professionals, some of them sharing households (also Gupta and Fergusson emphasize the importance of studying "local communities" see Gupta and Fergusson, 1997b: 25, 26). On a practical level within this theoretical framework, I allocated my research participants through a snowball method of sampling as part of the judgmental or purposeful sample category (see Bernard, 2006: 192-194) with an increased focus on Sahil's understanding of his social surroundings. The choice of the research sample was very much key-informant driven as I attempted to describe his particular social network.

Arriving from theoretical standpoints mentioned above, I propose my own concept of *communities of affection*, through which I attempt to expand on Appadurai's notion of *neighborhoods* (Appadurai, 1996: 178-185). As *community of affection* I

define a community (or social network of individuals that functions in this manner) based on mutually shared emotional ties in terms of a kin and friendships. The most important difference between Appardurai's *neighborhood* (Appadurai, 1996: 178-185) and my understanding of *community of affection* emerges as a site of social cohesiveness motivated by individual desire of belonging and participation. In my informants cases, three types of significant *communities of affection* arose: one organized around kin and friends in their homelands, the second constituted of *desi* (people of Indian origin) friends in Melbourne who became "second family abroad," and the third emerged around the close international and Australian friends in Melbourne. All these three different levels communities of affection gradated by experienced closeness became truly significant for my informant's establishment and understanding of their life in Melbourne and the ties they sustained with their homelands, which I will show on the practical level in the body of the thesis.

2.3. Transcending the Notions of "Nations" and "Cultures"

Since the 1990s, there has been an increased interest regarding the theoretical concepts of transnationalism and globalization within the social sciences as a form of reaction to the changing conditions worldwide. A variety of studies emerged around the concepts of globalization (e.g. Appadurai, 1996), cosmopolitanism (e.g. Hannerz, 1990; Beck, 1999; Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge, and Chakrabarty, 2000; Robbins, 1998) and transnationalism (e.g. Appadurai, 1996, Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999). Under the influence of these and similar studies, a need of reconceptualizing the notion of immigrant arose, as well as the concepts of locality, culture and nationhood. In this thesis, I accept Basch's, Glick-Shiller's and Szanton Blanc's proposal to perceive contemporary immigrants in terms of the concept of *transmigrant* (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999: 73-105) According to these authors: "*Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state* (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999: 73). This is precisely the case of my informants because they did not limit their identities to space of one nation-state and sustained constant, regular contacts primarily with their homelands and possibly other countries they developed ties with.

Moreover, my informants' stories and the *communities of affection* they created undermine the notion of "cultures" as discrete entities diving various populations across the world. This notion emerges as particularly problematic in cosmopolitan cities such as Melbourne, where highly educated transmigrants from various places establish their lives. The issues surrounding generalizations and the imagery of cultures as discrete have been raised by several scholars (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 1991; Clifford, 1992, Gupta; Fergusson, 1992, Gupta; Fergusson, 1997b, Malkki, 1992). I suggest that homogenizing frameworks of "culture" are neither appropriate nor can fully capture continuous processes such as immigration and the consequent negotiation of one's identity. Also, as Malkki has shown, it is highly inappropriate to categorize people in terms of a "national geographic" understanding of the world, or in other words incarcerate and territorialize people through notions of "cultural" and "national" identities (Malkki, 1992: 24-61). These two categories should be sharply distinguished, and links to the nation in terms of e.g. patriotism should be seen as a result of production and reproduction of nationalist discourse on which I will elaborate at the end of this thesis. As Malkki has emphasized: *'...Identity is always mobile and processual, partly self/construction, partly categorization by others, partly as condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera. It is a creolized aggregate composed through bricolage*' (Malkki, 1992: 37).

On the other hand, it's difficult to abandon categories of national identity while talking about (for example) "Indian immigration," for they are a common marker of distinction in everyday level interactions (and persist in some academic discussion as well). Division of immigrants based on their national identities was also common in the use of language amongst both my informants and the wider public in Melbourne. "National identity" is an important criterion in the immigration policies in Australia, yielding different requirements based on the particular citizenships; nevertheless, this does not mean that such borders are not being negotiated and transcended on everyday level interactions. In order to weaken at least this preconceived imagery, I refer to my informants of Indian origin in this thesis as *desis,* drawing the inspiration from Katy Gardner's article (Gardner, 1993: 1-15). *Desi* is a person inhabiting or coming from *Desh,* which is one of the Hindi terms for homeland, often referring to India as a country. My use is slightly different for Gardner, who with these terms categorizes the

ones who remained in India (Gardner, 1993: 1-15). I use the term to refer to both my transmigrant informants of Indian origin as well as their families who remained in *Desh*.

2.4. Doing Fieldwork: The Methods of Collecting the Data

The majority of the research took place in Melbourne, Australia, at various sites, typically the households of my informants, especially Vivek's and Dhruv's (the flat on Lygon Street, and later, the flat at Camberwell where they decided to move), locations of the social events, university grounds and my own apartment. I obtained a smaller part of the data in India, mostly in Mumbai and partly in Goa, on my two weeks long visit to Sahil and his family in the second half of February 2009 (Sahil's household in Bombay and various sites we visited together). In this sense, my research is partly an attempt of multiple-site, transnational ethnography, but it cannot be fully perceived as such, for a very limited time was spent in India with observations exclusively reserved to Sahil's family. For this reason, I consider this move only as an attempt of multi-site research, although my journey to India proved an important move which yielded a deeper understanding of the lives of my informants in Melbourne, especially the one of Sahil.

My fieldwork prevailingly uses two main sources of data – *participant observation* and *interviews*; however I have also worked with additional materials including media sources, Facebook, email and my photographic documentation:

1) During the *participant observation* I recorded over 15 000 words of field notes (including data considering various events, situations and the sites as well as my own feelings and interpretations, all distinguished from each other) (see Angrosino and Mays de Peréz, 2003: 107-154, Bernard, 2006: 342-375). I used a strategy of full immersion, in which I partly followed a call of phenomenological tradition, when one till certain extent becomes a phenomenon, they study and experience a "certain form of human life" (see Bernard, 2006: 371). This situation wasn't the target of my fieldwork but rather its product. I do not claim that I fully became "the phenomenon" I have studied due to the historical and gender differences of my own and my informants' experience and time limitations of this fieldwork, but my personal life was very much influenced and dictated by the studied topic. I believe that I was not perceived as a researcher (with exception of Ram and Gopal who I wasn't as familiar with). The sites of the participant

observation differed but mostly the observations took place in my informants' households in Melbourne.

2) *Interviews* totaling 15 hours with all 14 informants, including a record of a verbal informed consent concerning the project. The interviews were based on several months of ongoing participant observation (see Fontana and Frey, 2003: 61-106). I chose focused, yet flexible, semi-structured interviews that concentrated on significant aspects of migration experience of my informants (see Fontana and Frey, 2003: 62, 73). While conducting the interviews I retained a form of informal, open discussion during which my informants could allocate and express their positions. The presentations of interview excerpts are slightly modified due to the differences arising between spoken and written word in the textual form of this thesis. However, these changes are minimal; the excerpts respect the language of my informants and the meaning remains intact.

The analysis of the data used in this thesis can be classified in a broad sense as an interpretative, ethnographic analysis. Since the majority of the data I have collected is ultimately in a form of the text (field notes, interviews), the analysis of my data is based on an interpretative, theme driven, textual analysis. In order to organize the textual form of the data I have used thematic coding in order to derive larger categories and themes that I elaborate upon in my ethnographic writing (see Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 274-278). In the process of analyzing my data I have applied the cyclical process of analysis constituted of: data reduction (allocation categories and code building), data organization (juxtaposition of data and the rise of preliminary theory), data interpretation (drawing the conclusions, final theory building) (see Sarantakos, 1993: 300-301). During all the three steps of the process, the data is subjected to ongoing comparison (see Sarantakos, 1993: 300-301), thus the theory building is derived from the data itself, not the other way around; this is partly what Geertz has in mind, when he writes: '*This backward order of things – first you write and then you figure out what you are writing about – may seem odd, or even perverse, but it is, I think, at least most of the time, standard procedure in cultural anthropology*'(Geertz, 2000: V).

Denzin and Lincoln have suggested that: '*The many methodological practices of qualitative research may be viewed as soft science, journalism, ethnography, bricolage, quilt making, or montage. The researcher, in turn, may be seen as a bricoleur, as a maker of quilts, or, as in filmmaking, a person who assembles images into montages*…

…The product of the interpretive bricoleur's labor is a complex, quilt like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage-a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole.' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 5, 9) In the following manner, I embrace Denzin's and Lincoln's understanding of a qualitative research and my text should reflect upon this postmodern way of writing. The following chapters will resemble a certain type of bricolage or a quilt as I juxtapose theory and practice – represented in the migration stories of my informants, their experiences, their feelings, my experiences, and thoughts, media and political contexts and some work of literary fiction.

2.5. Contemplations on Ethics: Towards a Reflexive Anthropology

In this thesis I protect the privacy and public identities of all my informants and other persons that are mentioned by coding their names by aliases. My informants' names are coded by aliases they chose for themselves; the remaining names were chosen by me. Names of the different research sites remain unchanged since I believe that they do not threaten the privacy of the research participants. However, the major ethical issue I faced in the beginning of this project was an intimate relationship with my best informant Sahil, as I suggested in the introduction to this chapter. Although the *Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association* (approved February 2009) neither prohibits nor explicitly discourages the intimate relationships between the researcher and the research participants, such relationships are traditionally seen as at least controversial and problematic[3]. Therefore, when I decided to carry out my fieldwork, I found it also necessary to deal with my intimate relationship with Sahil also on a theoretical level.

Intimate relationships between the researchers and research participants were until recently rarely addressed in ethnographic literature and mostly discouraged (DeWalt, DeWalt, 2002: 86, Kulick, 1995: 3, 10). Exceptions from this "silence" across the discipline included often more self-reflexive authors concerned with the issues of

[3] In situations when a relationship between a researcher and research participant occurs, Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (approved February 2009) prescribes the following: "Anthropological researchers who have developed close and enduring relationships (i.e., covenantal relationships) with either individual persons providing information or with hosts must adhere to the obligations of openness and informed consent, while carefully and respectfully negotiating the limits of the relationship." (Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association, approved February 2009, III/5 pp. 3)

positionality for example Jean Gearing (see Gearing 1995 in DeWalt, DeWalt, 2002: 87-89). However, this "classical silence" is on the decline, and an increasing number of anthropologists discuss their own sexual experiences in the fieldwork. Gearing writes about developing an intimate relationship with her "best-informant" on the island of St. Vincent, where she has conducted the research at the time (see Gearing, 2005 in DeWalt, DeWalt, 2002: 87-89).

Gearing argues that an intimate relationship with a local subject was not only viewed as appropriate by the community but also increased her acceptance and lead to significantly deeper insights into daily life in St. Vincent. (see Gearing, 2005 in DeWalt, DeWalt, 2002: 87-89) Don Kulick emphasizes that the sexuality of the researcher is a field that needs to be explored within a discipline of anthropology when he writes: '*Particularly now, when at a time when anthropologists are finally beginning to examine and even celebrate various dimensions of their subjectivity in their fieldwork and in their writing, it seems both propitious and crucial to place the erotic subjectivity of the anthropologist firmly on the anthropological agenda. More than anything else, it seems pertinent to enquire what we gain by continuing to avoid the topic and not examining it*.' (Kulick, 1995: 6) In this thesis, I do not intend to explore the topic of erotic subjectivity, but I do attempt to discuss the topic in terms of the ethical issues of methodology and self-reflexivity of my research, for these questions of research, as Kulick reminds us, need to be raised.

The reason sex in the field was perceived as a thorny problem in classic anthropological writing is often the problem of "objectivity." Coincidently, similar anxiety regarding objectivity arises around feminist, semi-native or native anthropologists, who are often blamed for the lack of objectivity alike. Lila Abu-Lughod fittingly addresses this issue, when she deconstructs the notion of "objectivity" in terms of maintaining a distance in terms of "Otherness"; in other words the researcher remains "outside" (Abu Lughod, 1991: 468). As Abu-Lughod argues: '*What we call the outside is a position within a larger political-historical complex. No less than the halfie, the "wholie" is in a specific position vis-à-vis the community being studied*' (Abu Lughod, 1991: 468). I suggest that similarly can be perceived also intimate relationships in the field. In this sense, the question of "objectivity" becomes instead very much a question of positionality and therefore instead of defending the

positivistic ideals of "objectivity," the appropriately explained position of the researcher in the field, should be included.

Moreover, for Philip Bourgois, ethnography is something that by its definition goes against the positivistic research, when he notes that: "*Ethnographers usually live in the communities they study, and they establish long-term, organic relationships with the people they write about. In other words, in order to collect "accurate data," ethnographers violate the canons of positivist research; we become intimately involved with the people we study.*"[4] (Bourgois, 1996: 13) And so I ask: if relationships of all sorts are likely to occur in the field from the definition of the ethnographic research methods, then why should we blindly adhere to the principles of positivist research in the name of "objectivity" instead of simply admitting our own ultimately subjective position in the field as proposed by reflexive approaches in social anthropology condensed in the text above?

Based on my personal fieldwork experience, I suggest that intimate relationships between the researchers and informants raise specific questions and require additional theoretical and methodological explanations. There are also beneficial sides stemming from these situations; in certain cases, such research allows one to investigate topics and communities otherwise impalpable and in great depth. Similarly to Gearing's experience (see Gearing, 2005 in DeWalt, DeWalt, 2002: 87-89), in my case my relationship with Sahil defined my position and legitimized my presence within the community: I wasn't perceived as a researcher but as a type of an insider with a defined social status. Moreover, the relationship with Sahil enabled me to cross several boundaries of the field: I was a newly arrived immigrant there on a temporal basis, moreover, I was a white female (*gori*) with a European background in company of young prevailingly Indian men; the likelihood of this project being carried out under different circumstances was very low. Also, the intimate relationship in the field may help to minimize the perception of the "Other" as other, for one does not attempt to distance him or herself, but rather focuses on mutual comprehension and shared commonalities while perceiving his or her partner as fundamentally equal. Intimate relationships in the field may raise a variety of issues, but these issues can be often avoided when the

[4] In this particular example, "intimately involved" doesn't refer to the issue of intimate relationship in the field, but Bourgois is trying to emphasize a closeness, a familiarity that often arises between researchers and research participants.

researcher and the informants share mutual respect and honesty based on their friendships/relationships. In such cases, self-reflexivity, an endeavor to present a truthful account of the research and setting the limits between the spheres of professional and personal life are the crucial aspects that help to overcome ethical and other concerns of the topic. However, it is up to the individual reader to decide whether this thesis can claim its legitimacy.

2.6. On the Style of Writing: Migration, Narrative and Movement

'Of course,' Sandeep said, 'when I heard this first, in the terai,[5] from my nameless story teller, I asked: "What where these stories, how did they go?"'

'Of course,' murmured the sadhus.[6] 'It is a question to be asked.'

'But she said (Zeb-ul-Nissa, the Witch of Sardhana)*: "Don't be greedy. Something must be left for the future interpolators." Still, I asked again, and she said: "All stories have in them the seed of all other stories; any story of continued long enough becomes other stories, and she is no true story teller who would keep this from you." Then she was quiet, and I imagined stories multiplying spontaneously, springing joyously out of mother story, already whole but never complete, then giving birth themselves, becoming as numerous as leaves on the trees, as the galaxies in the sky, all connected, no beginning, no end, and I grew dizzy, and then she went on.'*

Listen –

(Vikram Chandra, 2000: 113-114)

In the last section of this chapter, I have decided to start the explication with an introductory citation by well-established Indian novelist Vikram Chandra. In the quotation from *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* Chandra portrays a scene of magic realism in which he briefly elaborates on the topic of stories and storytelling. Of course, perceiving the excerpt from the point of view of literary theory, as an explanation of how stories work, wouldn't necessarily be the most effective exercise as it concerns a work of fiction. However, I consider this excerpt quite inspirational for it suggests that,

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[5] *Terai* – plains south of Siwalik Hills spreading across the borders of India and Nepal (in this case) or a broad, felt hat worn by Europeans or Gurkha (Nepalese) soldiers in India.

[6] *Sadhus* – word originating from Sanskrit referring to an ascetic, yoga practitioner or wondering monk in search of *moksha* (liberation), on everyday life basis *sadhus* are also referred to as "holy men."

in a sense, stories have neither actual beginnings nor ends, but stem from each other, one after another, and while whole they are never complete, and are still in a way all connected. Let me elaborate – a story creates a certain whole, and generally offers a chosen set of events, organized together around a plot that determines its dynamics and gives the reader a sense of coherence. Yet, this delineation of a story is determined by the author, or another story teller who retells it. Both the beginning and end are rather arbitrary. They can become powerful tools of the emplotment, but they do not necessarily exhaust the story's potential; in this sense the stories are never complete. As with the phenomenon of verbal associations, one story easily leads to another, for example through shifting the focus to a supporting character. When the story is retold by someone else or when the audiences change, the original meanings are likely to shift and new stories and their comprehensions emerge. Thus, the way in which Chandra elaborates on the story, seems to underline its mobility, as if the stories were inexhaustibly on the move, constantly shifting, constantly present but never static, never the same. It is precisely this idea of a story I am going to approach in this last section of this chapter. In the following text, I would like to offer a theoretical model of how a story-narrative encompasses movement, which enables the linking of it with a person's identity and how this relation made between movement, story and identity can contribute to the discipline of social anthropology. What I will attempt to show is what Andrew Dawson and Nigel Rapport had in mind when they suggested that: '*It is in it and through the continuity of movement that human beings continue to make themselves at home; seeing themselves continually in stories, and continually telling the stories of their lives, people recount their lives to themselves and other as movement.*' (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 33)

Before I focus my attention on the benefits of a story as a universal medium of communication, I will selectively draw attention to the context of storytelling in social anthropology concerning some questions raised after the literary turn and the crisis of representation. These questions are commonly regarded as problems of "textuality" or representation (awareness of problematic nature of the literary representations of ethnographic data and the strategies that deal with such problems). Lila Abu-Lughod embraces the issues of textuality as an important strategy of writing against (and beyond) the concept of "culture" when she states that: "*The third strategy how to write*

against culture depends on accepting the one insight's of Geerts's about anthropology that has been built upon by everyone in this "experimental moment" (Marcus and Fisher 1986) who take textuality seriously. Geertz (1975, 1988) has argued that one of the main things anthropologists do is write, and what they write are fictions (which does not mean they are fictitious)." (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 473) In *Interpretation of Cultures* Geertz points out that what anthropologist write are interpretations of second or third order (Geertz, 2000: 15). As Geertz argues: '*They are, thus, fictions; fictions, in a sense that they are "something made," "something fashioned" – the original meaning of fictiō – not that they are false, unfactual, or merely "as if" thought experiments*' (Geertz, 2000: 15). In this regard, the question of textuality is related to both to objectivity and self-reflexivity; ethnographic writing can be partly perceived as fiction for the observations, descriptions, interpretations and final texts are products of the researcher's subjective, individual mind. However, both Abu-Lughod and Geertz deny that this could fundamentally impact the veracity of the account (Geertz, 2000: 16, Abu-Lughod, 1991: 473). Abu-Lughod proposes a new treatment of both fieldwork approaches and the anthropological writing in terms of what she titles "ethnographies of the particular" (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 473-476). Through privileging particular individual agencies and particular events, Abu-Lughod claims to avoid generalizations and the gap between the researcher and the Other (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 474-476). Abu-Lughod explains: *'Thus to the degree that anthropologists can bring closer the language of everyday life and language of the text, this mode of making other is reversed'* (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 474).

Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson offer another interesting perspective of how the studies of social life and the studies of storytelling are connected through the relationship between movement, story and identity (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 19-38). Following Bateson's observation that the human brain thinks in terms of relationships (Bateson and Ruesch, 1951) they draw a direct link between movement and identity (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 19, 20). Rapport and Dawson argue that: '*To conceive relationships (and so create things) is to move or cause to move things relative to the point of perception (the brain) or relative to other things within the field of perception. Movement if fundamental to the setting up and the changing of relations by which things gain and maintain and continue to accrue thingness… …Another way of saying this is*

that the mind operates with and upon differences. Relationships are about differences…'(Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 19, 20). The connection between the human mind, individual identity and movement which Rapport and Dawson suggest seems to be crucial for the understanding of both the social actors and the social systems these actors engage in. According to Rapport and Dawson there are three significant corollaries stemming from this relationship: 1) Continuous movement is an essential characteristic of how an individual mind perceives and constructs an environment (both "cultural" and "natural") and the relationships and differences derived from these actions are both material and immaterial.2) The mind is always individual and so are the perspectives of different social actors. 3) What is known as an "order" is just set of particular relationships, differences that the individual mind recognizes as normative (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 19, 20).

Narratives are significant verbal means of expressing these relations, for a narrative in its very structure embodies temporality. In Rapport's and Dawson's words: '*…a narrative, can itself be conceived of as a form of movement…*'(Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 28). Moreover, Dawson and Rapport explain: '*To recount a narrative, in short, is both to speak of movement and to engage in movement. One tells of people, objects and events as one moves them through time and one moves from the start of one's account to its end. Narrative mediates one's sense of movement through time, so that in the telling one becomes, in Rushdie's (telling) observation (1991: 12), an émigré from a past home.*' (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 28) Parallels made between the human mind, identity and narratives propose an interesting model of studying the subjectivities of individual agency in relation to a variety of social systems, social forces and temporality. Rapport and Dawson follow Kerby's argument (Kerby, 1991) in arguing that: '*The self arise out of signifying practices, coming to know itself and the world through enculturated narrational acts. In a particular sociocultural environment, the self is given content, is delineated and embodied primarily in narrative constructions or stories. It is these that give rise to the possibilities of subjectivity: "it is in and through various forms of narrative emplotment that our lives – ...our very selves – attain meaning" (Kerby, 1991: 3). And being merely an outcome of discursive practice, the subject or self has no ontological or epistemological priority. Rather "persons" are to be understood as a result of ascribing subject status or selfhood to those "sites of*

narration and expression" that we call human bodies. And the stories they tell of themselves and others are determined by the grammar of their language, by genres of their culture, by the fund of stories of their society, and by the stories others tell and have told them.' (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 28, 29) Dawson's and Rapport's explanations offer two valuable points: The first is the one that Kerby brought up concerning narrative emplotment (the paramount tool for inscription of the meaning) as manifestation of subjectivity (see Kerby, 1991 in Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 28, 29). The second is that human bodies themselves are "sites of narration and expression" (Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 28, 29). In other words: for the most part, the way the persons understand each other is mediated and becomes apparent in language; in telling and sharing the stories of our lives. As Barbara Hardy has fittingly reminded us: '*We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative*.' (Hardy in Dawson and Rapport, 1998: 34).

Considering the arguments given in this chapter, I take positionality and subjectivities of both me as a researcher and the research participants seriously. Therefore the body of this thesis primarily focuses on the particular narratives of particular individuals concerning transnational migration as told and experienced by these subjects. As I have shown earlier, it is inevitable that the interpretations of the researcher are to a certain extent subjective; in a sense they are fictions (Geertz, 2000: 15). Bearing in mind this commonly acknowledged fact, the structure and the "emplotment" of this thesis must be viewed as a result of my subjective agency stemming out of my specific position I acquired in the field. However, the stories that my informants told to me or each other are real – they are the verbalized negotiations and comprehensions of their fluid identities within the migration process. The following text is the inevitable outcome of a combination of both my informants' and my own insights organized into the text from the perspective of my socio-historical position. This thesis attempts to retell the particular stories of migration of my informants, in which the identity of the self becomes apparent in the movement of the telling as parallel to the physical movement of bodies within the migration process. At the "heart" of this paper stand the individual flexibilities of transnational identities – after all, the

social sciences should open spaces for the voices and the stories of those who would not be otherwise heard.

3. ‘Melt like Sugar in Milk’: The Contemporary Migration Flows General Skilled Migration Policy in Australia in Context of Contemporary Migration Flows

In the previous theoretical part, I focused on various methodological issues that one might encounter while carrying out an ethnographic fieldwork and also some theoretical positions concerning the migration process I apply in this thesis. The following section, constituting the body of this thesis, presents the research data interpretations and representations of the particular moments in life and life strategies applied by individuals in the migration process. Before I elaborate closer on migration experiences of my informants, I will place their “migration stories” into a broader context of migration with an increased focus on the immigration policies of Australia. I will also partially focus on the emigration strategies of India, these two nation-states have affected the majority of my informants and also as I suggest immigration and emigration are inevitably linked. Part of title of this chapter “Melt like Sugar in Milk” refers to Deepa Mehta’s famous film *Earth* (Mehta, 1998). Deepa Mehta is an independent film director of Indian origin. In *Earth*, Mehta uses a brilliant metaphor that, in my opinion, could be applied to illustrate the strategy of Overseas Student and General Skilled migrations in Australia. The story of *Earth* develops around Parsee family from Lahore during the fall of Raj and division of Pakistan from India. In the midst of social upheavals and drawing new physical and ideological boundaries between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Brits and others, a mother explains to her daughter the positions of Parsees. She tells her daughter a story in which she compares Parsees to sugar: Parsees are like sugar in milk. Like sugar in hot milk, they “dissolve” – they merge with the content of the “glass” while sweetening the milk and the same time. Similar to Parsees, my *desi* informants were also in a sense expected to “melt yet sweeten,” and they in many ways they did, certainly from the point of view of the Overseas Student and the General Skilled Migration policies in Australia. Following this metaphor, in this chapter I will show how Australia carefully formulates the immigration rules in terms of these specific migration streams that privilege relatively financially secure migrants with high levels of education, migrants whose presence has a positive impact on the country’s economical development.

Migration, immigration, and emigration are terms that refer to the physical movement of human beings from one area to another, across the boundaries of nation-states and around the globe. While the word migration emphasizes the actual physical movement, immigration and emigration are more specific labels that indicate the direction of the flow in the perspective of a nation-state. I suggest that both immigration and emigration are movements that are inevitably linked in one process of migration, in which both arrivals and departures matter. The world's migrant population has grown dramatically throughout the twentieth century, leaving the beginning of the twenty-first century with 213,944,000 people on the move (UN migration chart 2009). The second half of the twentieth century was referred to by some as the "age of migration" (see Brettel and Hollifield, 2001: 1). The first decade of the twenty-first century clearly mirrors this growing trend. Graeme Hugo explains this while pointing out three economic, political and demographic aspects allowing migration in the extent that we know it today: '*The Global Commission on International Migration (2005: 6) have argued that increased international migration is being driven by a widening in the gap between nation-states with respect to the '3Ds': Development, Demography and Democracy. As gradients along these dimensions steepen there is a corresponding increase in the flow of people.*' (Hugo, 2006: 109) Certainly, these aren't the only significant factors influencing the process of migration, but they are phenomena individual nation-states need to approach and deal with. Migration, and especially skilled migration, proved to be an efficient solution to some of the contemporary problems concerning the demographic changes (e.g. aging of population) and both international economic cooperation and internal economic development. These increased numbers in international migration partly suggest the increasing interests of some nation-states to flexibly adapt their immigration policies.

However, as Kuřík aptly suggests, there are many "genres of mobility" – forced migration is a very different phenomenon than a vacation (Kuřík, 2010: 80). In my case, highly educated, skilled, young professionals migrating to Australia were in a completely different situation and treated very differently, especially in comparison to e.g. refugees, who are often prevented from even entering the territory (Australia's problematic attitude to refugees is well known). My informants were privileged immigrants favored by the Australian Immigration policy as I will show in this chapter

and need to be understood as such. As Kuřík argues: *'...The world needs to be perceived as a space, in which the distribution of power is uneven, and which generates both mobility and immobility, interconnectivity and disconnectivity, transnationalism and xenophobic nationalism'* (Kuřík, 2010: 80). I indeed agree. Moreover, often these contrasts appear simultaneously – e.g. despite Australia's multicultural approaches and attitudes, displays of xenophobic nationalist acts aren't that uncommon. Xenophobia and racism (generally linked with nationalism) can certainly appear in Australia; attacks against Indian students in 2009 or Cronulla Riots in 2005 can serve as a good example. However, the fact that Australia has consciously removed xenophobic and racist nationalistic discourses from its immigration policies (at least in the majority of the cases) should be seen as a positive development.

3.1. Overview of Immigration Policy in Australia – Overseas Student Visa and Skilled Migration Program

"*Multiculturalism results in a broadening of immigration policy. People from all countries may apply to immigrate. However, overall immigration levels are reduced.*"

(An inscription on the information panel at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne, 2008.)

In this section I will elaborate on immigration policies in Australia, with focus on the General Skilled Migration program. The following chapter is crucial in understanding the conditions under which my informants were first accepted and later established in the receiving country. The somewhat antithetic statement above characterizes the recent changes in the Australia's immigration policies on the information panel at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne. The panel informs the reader of, on one hand, a broadening of the immigration policy; on the other hand, it talks about overall reduction. Even though this statement might seem rather antithetical, it points to significant changes that Australia's immigration policy has undergone in the past sixty years. This subchapter focuses mainly on the shifts related to an increasing preference for skilled immigrant population. Australia's focus on skilled migration sets relatively equal conditions for applicants worldwide but at the same time is a highly selective process that excludes many of the world's migrants. The young immigrants

this thesis is concerned with are examples of this specific skilled migration flow that Australia's immigration policy favors. I offer below a sketch of contemporary trends and a brief historical outline of the immigration policy in Australia which has both enabled and determined the translocation of these individuals and for this reason constitutes a crucial context of their migrant experience.

Australia is one of the world's countries where for more than two hundred years the majority of the population has been formed by migrants from various places (acknowledging the Aboriginals and Torres Straight Islanders as indigenous people of the continent). However, the most important changes in Australia's immigration policy regarding the Asian population took place after World War II. Thus, at the centre of my focus within this broad topic are the changes in Australia's immigration policy towards a more equal model and the emergence of the Skilled Migration program that allowed my informants to establish themselves on a more permanent basis. Sowell argues the motivation for broadening the immigration policy in Australia became significant along with the demographic changes after World War II (Sowell, 1996: 46). As he explains: '*Restrictions on the national or racial origins of immigrants fell into disrepute after World War II, which discredited the racist doctrines associated with Hitler and the Nazis. The "white Australia" policy and the stringent American restrictions on immigration from Asia both fell under criticism. Australia, aware that its small population made it vulnerable to invasion during the Second World War, began encouraging immigration from around the world in the postwar era, and subsidized many of the immigrants*.' (Sowell, 1996: 46) Brettel and Hollifield note that, in the post-World War II period, 40% of population growth in Australia has been the result of migration (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 1), which resulted in a significant shift in Australia's demography.

Another important turning point in Australia's immigration policy was the relinquishment of the White Australia Policy that discriminated against non-European inhabitants. The abolition of White Australia Policy took over 25 years and stemmed from the World War II situation (Australian Government – Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009). Since 1949, the discrimination against the non-European settlers slowly diminished until final vestiges were removed in 1973 by the new Labor government (Australian Government – Department of Immigration and Citizenship,

2009). Yet an increase in the number and percentage of non-European immigrants did not take place until after the Fraser government came into office in 1975 (Australian Government – Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009). In late 1970s, Australia implemented a series of multicultural policies that have been broadened continuously ever since, and as a result Australia is now understood as "multicultural nation" (Australian Government – Department of Immigration and Citizenship and Smolicz, 1997). Sowell also emphasizes that Australia is one of the few world's countries that continued to maintain open immigration policies: '*By the late twentieth century, Australia was one of the few countries in the world with relatively open immigration policies. In proportion to its existing population, Australia accepted double or triple the proportions accepted in Europe*' (Sowel, 1996: 44). This trend continues to the present day, as Hugo argues: '*Australia continues to be an important global player in migration: the United Nations (2006a) ranks it as having the eleventh-largest stock of overseas-born persons and with almost a quarter of its population being foreign-born, eleventh among countries in the proportion made up by immigrants.*' (Hugo, 2006: 108) The Immigration Museum in Melbourne mentioned above is both a reflection and a tribute to these processes and highlights the widespread impact of migration in Australia.

Another landmark in Australia's immigration policy constituted the impacts of globalization and increased connectivity of the world in last couple of decades. Hugo argues that: '*Australian international migration has undergone a major transformation since the early 1990s. This has been largely a result of globalization and a response to it. While globalization has broken down barriers to, and accelerated exchanges of, goods, ideas, trade, finance and information, the effect on mobility of people has been more complex.*' (Hugo, 2006: 107) As Hugo notes, Australia was already one of major immigration countries before the increase in global connectivity, but the phenomenon of globalization had far-reaching impact on its nature, composition and effects (Hugo, 2006: 107). One of the most important shifts, as Hugo emphasizes, was diverting attention to permanent settlement, the dominating approach in postwar migration policy, while developing a complex array of visa categories with a wide range of lengths of stay and commitment to Australia (Hugo, 2006: 107, 108). Amongst such changes, as Hugo notes, one of the apparent shifts has been an increasing focus on skill in selection of

migrants (Hugo, 2006: 108). Thus, as Hugo argues: *As a result there has been an exponential increase in non-permanent migration to Australia so that while in 2004-2005 there were 123,424 incoming permanent settlers to Australia, a total of 371,374 non-visitor foreigners were granted temporary residence in Australia that year'* (Hugo, 2006: 110).

Moreover, as Hugo emphasizes, the process of globalization and increased temporary migration are closely linked through the internalization of labor markets, the development of multinational companies moving workers between nations, the cheapening of international travel, and the international technology revolution establishing effective links with one's country of origin – all of these aspects facilitated the development of temporary migration (Hugo, 2006: 110). One of the main temporary visa categories allowing employment, and on which an increasing number of temporary immigrants travel to Australia, is the overseas student visa (see Hugo, 2006: 111). Moreover, as Hugo suggests in reference to Kritz: '*Australia has become one of the world's five pre-eminent destinations of foreign students, along with US, UK, Germany and France. The massive increase in international migration of students is one of the defining elements of the new international migration and is strongly associated with globalization and the internalization of labour markets (Kritz 2006)*' (Hugo, 2006: 111). In the year 2005 190,674 visas were issued to overseas students reaching 208,038 in June 2006 – both being the highest levels reached (Hugo, 2006: 111). The largest group of these students consists of the Chinese at 15%, followed by Indians and Koreans with 9% each, Japanese with 8% and Malaysian constituting 5% (Hugo, 2006: 111). Simultaneously, the number of students studying abroad in tertiary education doubled within the last decade of twentieth century and increased by a third between 2000 and 2003 (Hugo, 2006: 111).

This rapid increase in numbers enabled by Australia's immigration policy was a response to the beneficial impacts of foreign student migration. Foreign students are beneficial in terms of close international links and knowledge transfers (see Hugo, 2006: 111). Also, foreign students are a significant source of foreign exchange (Hugo, 2006: 111). Hugo argues that Australia's international education produces export earnings as high as 10.8 billion AUD in 2006 (Hugo, 2006: 111). According to Hugo, who refers to Skeldon, these foreign students are increasingly perceived by Australia

(and other countries with similar approaches) as the "raw material to train some of the human capital" the country needs (Hugo, 2006: 111). Hugo explains in reference to Simmons that: '*They are the next generation of skilled migrants who differ from the previous generation in that they are what Simmons (1999) describes as 'designer migrants' in that they have been specifically 'designed' by the destination country to meet its skilled human resource needs*' (Hugo, 2006: 111, 112). This shift in the perception of immigrants stems out of the new global context in which theories of economic growth highlight the significance of "human capital to knowledge based economies"; instead of "maximizing the stock of gold and silver," countries like Australia focus on "maximizing the brain power within their borders" (Hugo, 2006: 116). In this sense, as Hugo highlights, the new global migration (as opposed to earlier mass international population movement) can be understood as the "global quest for talent" (Hugo, 2006: 116). Thus, in Australia's immigration policy we can see a progressive development of new types of highly skilled immigration categories that are crucial for the country's economic as well as social development that must be understood in terms of the globalization process (see Hugo, 2006: 118, 119). This process reflects clearly in immigration statics – as Hugo notes, in 1995-1996 24,100 skill visas were granted and in 2005-2006 the number reached 97,340, while family migration decreased from 57.4% to 28.8% throughout the same years (Hugo, 2006: 118). For Australia, this is in part a necessary strategic move for the increased emigration levels resulting in overall brain drain and therefore the immigration of skilled persons exceeds emigration in order to balance the situation in the country (Hugo, 2006: 118).

This previously analyzed flow of students and skilled migrants to Australia is precisely the flow that delineates and characterizes the social network of my informants. All of these fourteen individuals came to Australia on student visa, out of which the majority studied the master's program at the University of Melbourne with the faculty of Business and Economics (but not all of them). Enrolling into a program with Australian university allowed them to obtain temporary residencies in the Australian territory for a couple of years (depending on the length of the program, which was generally 2-3 years), and after the completion of their studies, the vast majority of my informants did not intend on returning to their home countries. Instead, they chose to

stay in Australia through the General Skilled Migration program and attempt to obtain permanent residency. The year I lived in Australia (second half of 2008 till first half of 2009), many of my informants were just granted their permanent residencies. Thus, following the previous discussions covering Australia's immigration policy in the context of global migration flows, I will attempt to broaden the existing knowledge on migration in terms of these transitional states between temporary and permanent residency using the individual scope. In the chapters that follow I will focus on the questions of decision making of my informants and their negotiations of life strategies in Australia. I will attempt to illuminate these decision processes through individual stories told by my informants represented in "ordinary" events and "little things" that help to shape or manifest the importance of such decisions.

Moreover, the following chapters should also respond to Hugo's call for clarification of the transition between temporary and permanent residency visas. Hugo points out that: '*…little is known about the process whereby temporary residents decide to apply for permanent residence, the extent to which temporary residence is perceived from the outset by migrants as a preliminary stage moving toward permanent settlement, and the extent to which they make the decision after arrival in Australia*' (Hugo, 2006: 113, 114). The migration research focuses largely on the new arrivals but the interest in issues surrounding the transition from temporary to permanent migration is limited (Hugo, 2006: 114). One of the reason for this is, that as Hugo suggests, temporary migration and transnationalism are still predominantly dealt with quite separately from permanent-settlement migration although there is considerable overlap not only in Australia but globally' (Hugo, 2006: 113). Moreover as Hugo notices: '*The "conventional immigrant" to Australia is a person who has applied for, and obtained, a settler visa from an overseas-based Australian embassy or consulate and has subsequently travelled to Australia. However, in 2004-5 some 32.9 per cent of the Migration Program were 'onshore' in that they were already in Australia with temporary residence visas, and successfully applied for and obtained permanent residency'* (Hugo, 2006: 113). I suggest that such a theoretical gap between permanent settlement and temporary visas needs to bridged and properly examined if Australia is to successfully reassess and form effective immigration policies in the future. In the following chapters, I will attempt to show that many temporary migrants come to

Australia already with the hopes for obtaining visas of a more permanent character. Thus, in the case of student migration and The General Skilled Migration Program in Australia the line between temporary and permanent settlement is very fine since these temporary visas (especially overseas student visas) in most cases open the path to permanent residency or eventually citizenship.

3.2. The border control vs. economic benefits of migration and policies concerning emigration from India

Immigration, as I have emphasized in the beginning of this chapter, is inevitably linked to emigration. Thus, with an increase in immigration and elaboration of the immigration policies, attention was paid also to emigration. Unlike immigration, emigration in more developed countries is from a legal point of view a much less complicated process which nation-states have typically not attempted to control or restrict (exceptions generally include dictatorships and other political regimes restraining mobility of population). Although emigration was often perceived as a negative process of unrooting (cf. Malkki, 1992) – or worse, as a criminal offense in Saudi Arabia – lately such perceptions of emigration are being abandoned. Emigration like immigration can be advantageous for both sending and receiving countries, as for example in terms of remittances flows, business connections and other important alliances. As Hugo argues: '*More recently (United nations 2006b; World Bank 2006), while there has been recognition of the negative effects of brain drain, it has been shown that emigration can have positive developmental implications for origin nations. These effects are due to the remittances flows from expatriate communities, social and economic links developed by migrants between origin and destination countries, and return migration (Hugo, 2003)*' (Hugo, 2006: 108). The volume of remittances sent to countries of origin worldwide have reached 380,050 million USD worldwide in 2009 (UN migration chart 2009). As Sowell argues: '*...most of these remitters tended to be unskilled or semiskilled workers, so that these benefits accrued to working-class families, rather than to elites, as foreign aid has so often tended to do. As of the late 1980s, remittances worldwide were greater than all the foreign aid dispensed by all the various governmental agencies around the world*' (Sowell, 1996: 22). As a result of the growing importance of the migrant population, as Brettel and Hollifield note, many

sending countries have developed more transnational policies of dual nationality to maintain both presence abroad and attachment to home, as in the case of Portugal and more recently Mexico (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 16). Dual or multiple citizenships are also allowed in several other countries such as Australia, the US, the UK, Sweden or Switzerland (generally countries with more sophisticated immigration policies reacting to the changes in the contemporary world of migration). Some countries, like Spain, only allow dual citizenships with certain chosen countries. Often eligibility for multiple-citizenship is dependent on the sending country and the compatibility with its inner laws concerning citizenship. This does not mean one could not obtain multiple-citizenship "beyond" the jurisdiction of the nation-state. Nevertheless, despite obvious economic benefits, broader liberalization of immigration policy has not occurred, and intolerance and xenophobia continue to shape many of the immigration policies in lands such as the United States (see Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 19).

[7]Many countries, including India, do not allow multiple or dual citizenships. The Constitution of India does not allow the simultaneous possession of Indian and foreign citizenships. If an Indian national voluntarily acquires another citizenship, his Indian citizenship is automatically terminated (see Ministry of Home Affairs – Government of India, the Citizenship Act, 1955). At the same time, India has had to partially weaken these more than fifty year old regulations in order to maintain close links with the large Indian diaspora. As a necessary reaction to the significant increase of migration in the twenty-first century, the government of India has introduced Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)[8] scheme operational from 2.12.2005 (formally launched by the Prime Minister during the *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas* (PBD)[9], 2006 at Hyderabad on 7 January 2006). OCI is not the exact equivalent of dual-citizenship, but can be perceived as a

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[7] This paragraph is based on general knowledge and on public information available from various locations on official Indian government websites, which I list in the section of non-academic references since they are not typical sources of academic citations. Moreover, the entanglement of Indian governmental documents on the websites and the lack of dates and titles of the documents and information makes citation impossible. However, I do refer to particular documents and institutions, thus the information can be easily verified at the referenced website addresses.

[8] OCI – person registered as an Overseas Citizen of India under section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955. Eligible are foreign nationals, who were eligible to become citizens of India on 26. 1. 1950 or were citizens of India after 26. 1. 1950 or belonged to the a territory that became part of India after 15. 8. 1947. Also eligible are children and grandchildren of such individuals if the country of their citizenship allows dual citizenship of some form. Former or current citizens of Pakistan and Bangladesh are not eligible.

[9] *Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas* (Non-Indian Resident Day) is an annual holiday celebrated on January 9 (convention from 7. 1. to 9. 1.) in order to commemorate the Indian community abroad and highlight their contribution to the development of India.

form of permanent residency for people of Indian origin (PIO – Persons of Indian Origin)[10] who are simultaneously holders of a foreign citizenship (e.g. Ram in my case). Even though OCI provides its holder most of the benefits of the citizenship, the OCI holder is not eligible to vote and is subject to certain work and agricultural land owning restrictions (see Ministry of Home Affairs – Government of India, the Citizenship Act, 1955). Moreover, OCI's aren't eligible for an Indian passport, but instead receive an OCI card that grants lifelong, visa-free travel to India as well as exemption from registration with Indian police authorities (for any further benefits of OCI see Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) and the Citizenship Act, 1955). Most commonly, people of Indian origin who were granted a citizenship in a foreign country apply for OCI, as this allows them to efficiently function in both countries. Also both PIO's (PIO card holders) and OCI's are eligible after they reside in India in long term to apply under specified conditions for Indian citizenship. The Indian government also distinguishes the category of Non-Resident Indians (NRI) that applies to Indian citizens who ordinarily reside outside India and hold an Indian passport. More importantly, as Appadurai has emphasized, the status of NRI becomes privileged position since they are granted "special rights" (Appadurai, 2003: 340) As Appadurai explains: '*With economic liberalization in many parts of the world, there is also a cultural form of liberalization that invites citizens who have moved abroad to reinvest in their nations of origin, especially if they have not switched passports. India, for example, has the category Non-Resident Indian (NRI). At the present moment, in the continued euphoria over the end of communism and the command economy, as well as the wave of enthusiasm over marketization and free trade, NRIs have special rights, driven by national and regional forces seeking expatriate money and expertise in India. Thus Indian banks, states, and private entrepreneurs, in their desire for this expertise and wealth, are committed to special deals for NRIs, especially in regard to taxation, property rights, and freedom of movement in and out of India*' (Appadurai, 2003: 340).

[10] PIO is a person whose ancestors were Indian nationals and who is presently holding another country's citizenship/nationality/foreign passport – can be registered as PIO card holder. PIO card holders constitute another separate legal category with special rights reserved, but comparing to OCI the rights are limited. A PIO card holder can be a person who had at any time held an Indian Passport or whose parents or grandparents were born in or were permanent residents in India, based on a definition in Government of India Act, 1935, and other territories that became part of India thereafter (excluding Afghani, Bhutanese, Chinese, Pakistani and Sri Lankan nationals). Also a spouse of Indian citizen is eligible and as well as other possible cases of PIO's.

The majority of my *desi* informants as Australian PR's were categorized as NRI's. If they decided to get an Australian citizenship, they would become eligible for applying for OCI. This legal situation allowed them to efficiently maintain ties with both India and Australia without risking the loss of the majority of the rights in their home country after being potentially granted the Australian citizenship. Yet, in this particular case, keeping their Indian passports seemed like more advantageous strategy. Only time will show how many of them kept their Australian PR and how many decided to obtain an Australian citizenship. In the previous subchapter I attempted to outline several issues and changes that consider rather general strategies of border protection by different nation-states in the contemporary world of migration. I emphasized that migration is a phenomenon that can be beneficial for both sending and receiving countries, especially in terms of business connections, and is increasingly perceived as such. I argued with reference to other scholars that the contemporary rise of nation-states' interests in multiple-citizenship can be perceived as a successful strategy for developing and maintaining various connections with many other nations. Providing security and the possibility of return for migrants also strengthens the transnational interconnections amongst disparate countries worldwide. Australia's contemporary immigration focus lies on student and skilled professional migration, which serves the country as advantageous strategy of increasing its potential. Moreover, skilled and

Sahil at Immigration Bridge in Melbourne.
Photo: Markéta Slavková.

highly educated migrants not only improve demographic situations and help to develop crucial business connections, they also, as I will show in the body of this thesis, integrate into society with relative ease and tend to create fairly cosmopolitan identities. Thus, in this sense, the migrants Australia came to favor within contemporary migration constitute migrant's elites; not necessarily financially elite, but more in terms of their skills and levels of education. It is precisely in this sense that they become Mehta's "sugar in milk." In the very last part I focused on the citizenship policies of India; their responses to emigration which sustain the ties amongst the numerous members of Indian diaspora. The conditions under which my informants and other Indian citizens move abroad also helps to illuminate the decision process about whether to immigrate or not. The ability of repatriation makes the decision process somehow easier for one can always return, and there can't be "much harm" in giving immigration a chance.

4. Mumbai to Melbourne: Contemplations of Sahil's Translocation

'The migrant sensibility…I believe to be one of the central themes of this century of displaced persons…'

—Salman Rushdie (Rushdie, 1985:53 in Fisher and Mehdi, 1990)

'If there is a knower of tongues here, fetch him;
There's a stranger in the city
And he has many things to say.'

—Mirza Ghalib (Ghalib in Rusdie, 2009)

As the title of this chapter suggests, I let my informants' stories begin

Overlooking Coloba, Bombay, with the Gateway of India seen in middle. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

conventionally through Sahil's recollection of his journey that brought him to Australia. The reason for this is twofold: first, I want emphasize that the Sahil's translocation was an individual step to take – he was alone, a solitary wanderer in contemporary global migration flows. Second, Sahil constitutes my theoretical standpoint from which I attempt to derive the rise of a social network of friends (the Melbournian *community of affection*) through which he established himself in Melbourne. The center of my attention lies on Sahil's "migration story": his recollections, since I conducted the interview in 2009 and Sahil had left India in February 2006, as well as the

circumstances of decision making, his thoughts, experiences and strategies in this process[11]. The prevailingly individual scope of this chapter also enables me to show that not all the aspects of migration journeys are the result of precise planning but can be also coincidental; each migration journey is both a result of planning and situational responses to various circumstances and events. The goal is to understand migration on two different levels: it attempts to underpin Sahil's individual journey from Mumbai to Melbourne in the contexts of the some contemporary migration trends that are significantly shaping the global terrains.

In the previous chapter, I attempted to place the context of my informants' journeys into the specific stream of overseas student and general skilled migration in Australia. I suggested that my informants were in a position of favored immigrants and belonged to what many refer to as "professional, elite migrants." By the time they conducted their journeys to Australia, their families could afford to finance their education and other expenses required. However, not all of my informants can be described as affluent, which I will illustrate using Sahil's example. While some of my informants came from well established upper classes, more of them were of middle class background and their migration journeys were preceded by generations of hard work. For many of my informants' families, sending their children to Australia was a great financial burden. However, this burden was perceived as an investment that would pay for itself in the future; a master's degree and experience abroad was expected to increase the life chances of their children. Even in these privileged conditions, migration brings a "sacrifice," both financially, and more importantly regarding the separation of children from their parents – an emotional loss of the closest – sacrifice of love and out of love that had to be made.

4.1. For the Sake of Better Life: The Story of Sahil's Translocation

In an interview recorded in May 24, 2009, I asked: '*Tell me how you got to Australia?*'

'*Mmm, I took a plane*,' retorted Sahil.

[11] The following text is based prevailingly on Sahil's recollections of the context of the journey recorded in an interview from May 24, 2009. A smaller part of the data comes from two other interviews (one from April 23, 2009, and the second from June 9, 2009) and a minor, yet significant part of the data is based on informal conversations recorded in my field notes.

Since I demanded more details, Sahil briefly contemplated and begun to talk: '*Mmm, I wasn't doing anything – my sister (Aashi) was going to go to the US for her studies and we both finished our bachelor's in the same year. And she got a good job and she screwed up her the tests to go to the US (in order to study), so she took up the job and she was going to the US. And I was anywhere, not doing anything at all, so my dad (Ravi) asked me if I wanted to go to Australia. I was like, ok, cool. Yeah, that's how*,' recounted Sahil. After the suggestion was made, Sahil started examining different options. It took him at least another month before, he started an application process. As Sahil hesitated, the pressure from his family gradually rose. One day Sahil's father called the taxi he used to take to work and gave Sahil a lift to the IDP India office. On that day, Sahil's sister Aashi accompanied them to offer support to her brother, for Sahil felt shy and claimed he "couldn't talk at all." They set out from their apartment on Juhu Beach in Santacruz and made their way along the busy roads of the city for about an hour until they reached downtown Mumbai. After they split up, Ravi continued to his office and the siblings headed to the IDP office near Churchgate, Railway Station in South Mumbai – one of the world's largest student placement and English language testing services provider.

'*Why were they (family) pushing you?'* I inquired.

'*Because I was lazy, I didn't wanna do anything. I wanted to make easy money. So I didn't want to travel one hour on train just to get to that office. I wanted everything, all the information getting to me in my house*,' replied Sahil.

By the time Sahil (along with his family) began to examine the possibilities for studying abroad, the destination country was still undecided. Sahil himself didn't seem to have a preference. He explained that the most popular destinations of Indian students based on his knowledge included the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia, with the US considered the most prestigious option. '*I mean it's first the US, then the UK and then Australia*,' Sahil said. I wondered why the US was the most popular destination out of these countries. '*I don't know. I think because all the top universities are there. And they say it's the land of opportunity and all that,'* responded Sahil. As Sahil explained, these countries were popular because English is the official language of communication, and applicants wouldn't encounter major communication problems after the arrival.

Apart from these countries, he wasn't sure if there were many other options. He mentioned New Zealand, but he believed that young Indians would only go there if they either didn't succeed in Australia or if they wished to study a course that was not offered in Australia. Sahil chose not to study in the US even though his sister was moving there, because for some reason he didn't like the idea of the US, which limited the selection to the remaining two options – the UK and Australia. At first Sahil was more inclined towards studying in the UK following his father's recommendation. He filed an application at another agency close to the IPD office, but nothing happened for the following six months or so. About a year after he first started the process his father Ravi suggested he go Australia instead. The children of Ravi's friend lived in Australia at the time, and Ravi grew to favor this option as his friend shared information of his children's lives abroad. Sahil also recollected his father saying he had heard that the UK is more racist. Sahil cared little where he was going, so he followed his father's suggestion and returned to the IDP office to continue the application process for Australia. '*I didn't know what I was doing. So I was like, who cares the UK or Australia, everything was the same,*' declared Sahil.

By the time Sahil initiated the application process to go to Australia, another event occurred that influenced the decision to study abroad. Sahil's mother Rupali was accustomed to inviting an astrologer to visit the family from time to time – the same astrologer whom I met several years later during my visit of Sahil and his family in 2009. It was there, in Sahil's home on Juhu Beach sitting on a floor cross-legged while dining, that I was informed that Sahil came to Australia "due to the astrologer's prediction." When I inquired about the event in Australia in 2009, Sahil recollected: '*Mhm, I think he came (on) after my dad told me to go to Australia. And I had begun the process. So at the same time I was even applying for like NBA in India and this guy came and I was applying for Australia but he didn't know all this. And he told me that I'm gonna study (like) abroad. Not in India. So my mom asked him if NBA in India – would he do NBA in India or abroad. He said, abroad, he said. Like his, what do you call that, eh the chart, it says that I'm gonna study abroad and I'm gonna stay abroad. And I'm not gonna live in India. So yeah…*' Sahil didn't really know what he felt. He knew he had initiated the process of going abroad, so he thought it could be "maybe possible." The encounter with the astrologer seemed to have a significant impact on

Sahil's and his family decision for him to move abroad. On the other hand, from what I understood about Sahil, based on the stories and pieces of information he shared with me and after confronting this knowledge with my research data, I perceived the event as having a subtle yet firm influence on the decision, and with differing meaning for him and his family members. Sahil told me several times he felt ambiguous about the astrologer. He considered himself an atheist and believed neither in magic nor astrology, although when some of the predictions made by the astrologer "turned out to be true" it made him wonder. Although, Sahil cared little for the astrologer, for him the prediction perhaps opened up a horizon of various possibilities; it allowed him to dream of different life. For his parents, especially for Rupali, the prediction meant something more momentous – an important aspect of deciding her son's "fate." Ravi and Rupali's hopes for their son to go and live abroad were supported by the prediction based on the constellation of stars in a moment of Sahil's birth, which in India is generally considered a serious matter. For the parents, at least, the journey seemed worth the effort.

When I asked Sahil how the event seemed to him, he replied that at first he was thrilled. He was excited about the idea of going abroad. He would be allowed to work in Australia, and he dreamt of making money, for the lack of finances in his past bothered him and finally he would be able "to afford to go abroad or something like that." In an interview Sahil alleged: '*I still had eight months to go before I left India, so it didn't really feel so bad. Because I didn't realize that, you know, I'll have to leave my family and friends and all that, so I was pretty thrilled and excited*.' As the departure approached, Sahil began to understand the full consequences of the decision. He realized that he was the one who was leaving and everyone else he knew at that point would stay behind and that made him feel increasingly anxious. Sahil explained: '*Because I had to leave my family and all my friends, yeah… Then I suddenly realized that it's just twenty days before – like twenty days to go and I had to leave my mom and all that. It was just terrible. So I got sad.'* At that point Sahil didn't really want to leave and as he felt more hesitant, he tried to persuade his parents to reconsider the matter. In an interview in 2009 he recalled the last couple of days prior his departure for Australia in following words: '*Yes, it was funny because I got my visa two days before and it was funny because when I started the process, I was very shy so I couldn't talk to the girl, at*

the… (IDP office), who was my counselor but by the end of it, I don't know, we became very good friends and all that. Because I used to flirt with her a lot … So I told her not to tell my parents I got the visa because my flight was on the second of February and I got the visa two days before. And I didn't tell my parents that I got it, neither did she. And then my father was calling her up all the time and she wasn't answering the calls. And then she was messaging me, you need to tell your parents otherwise she'd get in trouble or something. And then the next day, I was like fuck it, I spent so much of money and all that, so I told them, oh yeah, I got the visa but just one day before. So according to them I got the visa one day before my flight but it was actually two days before my flight. And I was trying to convince my parents that I don't wanna go, so I wasn't packing up anything at all, looking for excuses of how I cannot go to Australia and stay there. But then yeah, they forced me into it. My dad was like oh, everyone feels like this when they are leaving but once you go there it will be fine bla bla. And then she packed my entire bag (Rupali – Sahil's mother) – in the middle of tears and all that, she was packing the bags.'

The following day, Sahil set out from Juhu Beach accompanied by his family and his best friend to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport in Mumbai. Before he entered the airport his father Ravi gave him detailed instructions about travel and the formalities at the airport. He explained which counter Sahil should go to first and what to do after that. Outside the entrance, Sahil said farewell to his family and friend; due to the security measures, Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport only permits passengers with valid flight tickets to enter the complex. He remembered the journey through the airport as smooth. He had flown only once before, when he was a child, and had no recollection of the trip. He felt excited, for he loved the idea of flying and he enjoyed watching planes in the sky. Often, Sahil and I would jokingly quarrel about which one of us would get the window seat on the potential travels we would take. Also, when he was a little child, he lived with his family near one of the Mumbai's airports and he used to watch the planes and dream as they descended and took off into the sky. Eventually, he boarded the plane and headed for Melbourne, Australia – the unknown place where he would live; he didn't know how long it would be before he would see those closest to him again.

4.2. What Remained Unsaid: Notes on Sahil's Translocation

The previous part of this chapter was in a form of my representation of Sahil's initial migration "story." In this following section, I will offer my interpretations of the previously mentioned events and put them in the context of migration theory. I juxtapose the previous highly particularized and individual scope with the broad abstract framework of migration theory to emphasize the vast gap between them. The importance of the following theoretical and interpretational part is that it sets the story of individual experience into an important context of global migration flows. On the other hand, it will become obvious that the abstract theory cannot capture the subtle, yet crucial determining aspects and the emotional dimensions of the individual experience. When Sahil boarded the plane at Bombay's international airport in early February in 2006 to head to Melbourne, Australia, he became part of the larger global migration flows. From the point of view of the theory, Sahil's migration was neither new nor modern phenomenon. The mobility of people around the globe is a major, social phenomenon that has taken place over thousands of years (e.g. Sowell, 1996: 1). However, Sahil's journey was part of the contemporary transmigrant flows that emerge as radically different from the ones in the past (see Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999, Brettell and Hollifield, 2000; Hugo, 2006).

When Sahil's father Ravi proposed Sahil's migration journey, this occurred not in a vacuum but in a socio-cultural environment in which migration was considered a viable strategy of improving one's life chances, an idea supported by stories of other migrants who have "succeeded" abroad. As Brettel and Hollifield showed, the "culture" existing across the borders which powerfully shapes a migrant's decision is qualitatively different from the ones of the past (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 16). Following Massey's argument (Massey et al., 1994), Brettel and Hollifield suggest that this could be linked to the spread of consumerism as well as the immigration success, which generates more emigration (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 16). As they explain: '*Migration becomes an expectation and a normal part of the life course, particularly for young men and increasingly for young women. What emerges is a culture of migration.*' (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 16) Thus, what we can notice nowadays is, borrowing Brettell and Hollifield's term (see Brettell and Hollifield, 2000: 16), a certain "culture of migration," in which mobility around the world is perceived a particular life

strategy. Moreover, this opportunity is also available to large numbers of women, as we can see with Sahil's sister Aashi (or later Sahil's friends Savera and Katyayani), who even decided to immigrate first. Also, this tendency was projected into their parents' ideas, since they considered both of their children equally capable of translocation abroad. In a theoretical perspective, the increasing number of women in the world's migration is also an important feature of these radically new migration flows. For example, in her study *When Woman Comes First,* Marian Sheba George elaborates on rapidly changing gender ratios in migration, in which women are increasingly important agents (George, 2005). Hugo confirms this tendency when he states that: '*Another distinctive feature of the 'new' migration is that there are almost as many women who move as men*' (Hugo, 2006: 109). The United Nation statistics concerning migration from 2009 lists that 49% of total migrant population are women (migration chart UN 2009).

Another distinctive feature of the contemporary migration is that migration is unquestionably on the rise. To illustrate this rapid increase, Sowell in 1996 talks about a world of 100 million migrants (Sowell, 1996: 1), whereas as I have stated earlier, the United Nations migration report from 2009 lists more than 200 million (UN migration chart 2009). Clearly, the number of various factors contributing to this increase is large, yet it could be beneficial for the purposes of this thesis to give an overview of the ten significant elements listed by Hugo (see Hugo, 2006: 109) that drive the new international migration and that also constitute important determinants of Sahil's individual journey. According to Hugo there is: 1) A rise between demographic gradients in more developed countries, in which low fertility and aging contribute to labor shortages as opposed to still growing labor surpluses in less developed nations (Hugo, 2006: 109). At the same time there are: 2) widening of gaps in economic well-being between less and more developed nations (Hugo, 2006: 109) and 3) in more developed countries, there is increased labor segmentation, meaning that people from these countries avoid low-income and low-status jobs (Hugo, 2006: 109). These are three significant factors that put large numbers of people from all around the world on the move for they open opportunities of work in countries with higher standards of living. Also, Sahil's motivations were to a certain extent driven by the images of economic well-being – "better life," which is apparent from the previous text.

Moreover, these factors are also why 4) national governments are increasingly more interested in sending countries and the benefits that can accrue through migration (Hugo, 2006: 109). 5) Also, there are many transnational organizations with activities worldwide and many companies that operate across nation-states borders (Hugo, 2006: 109). Such companies often benefit from employing skilled immigrants with strong ties to their home countries and also contribute to a certain universalization of work.

Moreover, 6) the globalization of media enables fast and efficient transfers of information about other places and migration (Hugo, 2006: 109). This seems to be crucial aspect in terms of the personal motivations. Not only did Sahil and his family imagine the destination countries through their representation in media, but they also communicated with other Indian nationals to obtain information – often family members and family friends living abroad. In Sahil's case, the majority of information concerning Australia was provided by Ravi's friend, whose children lived in Australia. The efficient transfers of information are significant especially with combination of another factor 7) duration and cost of travel in between different countries reduced (Hugo, 2006: 109), which in result strengthens the transnational links between different nations (for those who can afford it). 8) There has been an increasing level of universalization of education in most countries and at the same time 9) there is a growth of the global migration industry (Hugo, 2006: 109). These are quite crucial factors influencing rapidly the numbers of migrants because they interconnect the education systems of different nation-states. The universalization of education in practice primarily means that the academic degrees are considered compatible and as a result students are able to obtain an education a different country. At the same, the universalization of education opened up a fast growing business opportunity for many global companies such as the IDP India that Sahil used to make the arrangements of his studies abroad.

Finally, 10) there is a massive growth of social networks, which facilitate the migration of family and friends. These networks provide information about migration and help new migrants establish themselves upon arrival (Hugo, 2006: 109), which is something I will more closely elaborate on in the following chapter. As Hugo adds: '*All this has meant that international migration has become within the calculus of choice of a major part of world's population when they consider their life chances. The*

proliferation of migration networks and the migration industry have meant that international movement is being brought within reach of more and more of the world's population.' (Hugo, 2006: 109) I suggest that these broader trends in migration constituted important conditions for my informant Sahil to set out on his own journey to Australia and clearly stand out from the previous representation of his journey. Moreover, the contemporary world situation of increased migration not only enabled his journey but also offered an important intellectual framework for both him and importantly his family members to take this idea in consideration.

When it comes to the choice of immigration destination, Sahil's list of potential of countries (Australia, the UK and the US) correspond with what has been described as the "South-North" movement (this wasn't only Sahil's case – 13 of my 14 informants could be linked to this particular movement). "South to North" movement – in other words the movement from poorer to richer countries, has significantly increased since the second half of the twentieth century and became distinctive future of contemporary migration (Sowell, 1996: 37, Hugo, 2006: 108). Graeme Hugo illuminates this significant shift when he writes: '*Whereas the dominant global flow in the early postwar decades was from Europe to the "traditional" migration countries it now is from less developed to more developed nations, the "South-North" movement. In 2005, a third of all international migrants moved from less developed to more developed countries and more than half net population growth in more developed countries has been due to immigration from less developed countries*' (Hugo, 2006: 108). However, this "South to North" movement does not necessarily mean the movement of poorer individuals to richer countries. Considering the rapid economic development and consequent changes, especially in Asia, we can no longer homogenize the populations of the countries traditionally seen as less developed. Even though my informants came from countries viewed this way, by the time these young educated people migrated their families had reached financially secure higher strata within home societies. Thus, in this sense it would be beneficial for future inquiry to reexamine the social background of these particular migrants.

Nevertheless, what I have also attempted to show through using the individual scope for this chapter and what escapes the larger frameworks of migration theory is that the destination choice can be perceived as precisely planned – some things are a

result of planning and careful decision making, some might be based on beliefs and hopes and others might be a result of a coincidence. For instance, Sahil's destination was for a long time undecided; in other words one might say that the destination didn't matter as long it would copy what I referred to as "South-North" movement and English would be the official language of communication. The preference given to Australia over the UK was prevailingly Ravi's choice and seemed heavily influenced by the fact that the children of Ravi's friend had settled in Australia (and not in the UK), therefore Australia became "a better country to think" of in terms of migration. Moreover, plans and decisions were supported by an astrologer's prediction, which strengthened the efforts of carrying out the journey (but in terms of science the astrologer's prediction seems to be an arbitrary factor – a coincidence). Moreover, I suggest, based on the previous text that both Sahil and his family did not perceive the journey to Australia only as a temporary matter from the very beginning even though Sahil's initial visa was of temporary character. Instead, it was treated as very serious decision of a more permanent character. This most likely one of the main reasons of Sahil's hesitation, for he knew that once the step would be taken, he would attempt to stay in Australia on a more permanent basis and successful completion of the Master's degree with University of Melbourne would become his "green card."

The previous text suggests that Sahil's motives and decisions of the journey weren't really a result of his own agency – they were formed through a collective family decision and initiated by his father Ravi. On one hand Sahil felt significant pressure from his family – in his own words, he felt "forced" – but on the other hand he understood the benefits of emigration. Sahil knew that both his life chances would most likely rise if he decided emigrate. Sahil dreamed about being wealthy for in India, for from his experience he knew that affluence meant also respect. He wanted wealth because it was something he lacked most of his life, but this wasn't the only reason (Sahil had a good chance of getting a good job in India as well). For Ravi, Sahil's father, the benefits of emigration of his children seemed to mean a hope for a better, more fair and more equal life, which Ravi himself had to struggle for most of his life since Sahil's family originated from "the Untouchables" (also known Outcasts, *Harijans*, *Dalits,* etc.), traditionally the most discriminated and poorest strata of Indian society. His father and mother grew up in a small Maharasthran village, where they were made to

experience their outcast background on the daily basis. Sahil mentioned that once when his parents still lived in the village, they had to obtain water from a public well. To get water, they had to suffer the higher castes' expressions of disdain. As young adults Ravi and Rupali moved to Bombay, where they stayed for a long time with different relatives until they could afford their own independent living. Rupali said she regretted eating mostly *chapatti* (flat, whole-weath bread made in India) and milk when she expected Sahil, for she believed that her son would have had grown taller. However, Ravi was educated, talented hard working man and his career grew into enviable (and envied) proportions.

Children playing outside the Holy Spirit Church in Margau, Goa. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

By the time his children reached adulthood, Ravi worked as General Manager for one of India's leading banks. Yet not even in this position he could avoid caste discrimination; he eventually took his case to court and won the trial about six years ago. Thus, despite India's rapid changes in society, caste discrimination is a serious and persisting issue. In this respect, I suggest that Ravi and Rupali's hopes for their children's emigration was not primarily the question of remittances or economic wealth (at the time they were financially well-established and prepared to sponsor their children abroad), they worked towards a "better" future for their children, a fair and less stressful future that their children might have had difficulties to have in India. This was something Sahil were very aware of as well. Also he had his experiences of caste prejudice. Only thinking about his origin – the social status constituted of hundreds of years of injustice – made him angry, sad and shy. Sahil very rarely mentioned the topic. One day in February 2009, Sahil and I were admiring the beauty of the *Holy Spirit Church* in Margau, Goa, while the local school-uniformed children laughed, chatted and chased each nearby. We began a discussion in which I

expressed my slight personal displeasure concerning expansion of Christianity and Colonial rule. Sahil disagreed, he was quite fond of the Raj: '*If the British didn't come to India, I would be cleaning the toilets and they would still be burning women alive.*' In this respect, Sahil did not like the Hindu tradition and understood himself as an atheist. Sahil knew that his father wanted to spare him the trouble he had experienced, and he also realized that the safest way of doing so was to leave for a different place where castes don't matter.

5. Establishing Ordinary Lives under Extraordinary Circumstances: The Rise of Melbournian Communities of Affection

'*Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story*.'

(Roy, 2008: 32)

In this short statement from her Man Booker Prize awarded novel *The God of Small Things* (Roy, 2008), Roy emphasizes the vast significance of "little events" and "ordinary things" – the episodes of our mundane lives that delineate our identities, and constitute our habits and beliefs as well as our decisions and expectations. In a sense, a person always derives him or herself from the experience of the past, which on a large scale constitutes who the person becomes in terms both the presence and the future. A person never remains in a same 'place,' however, for one is 'moved elsewhere' as the time goes past. Moreover, these transgressions of identity stand out even as more apparent when one moves across geographical spaces, and it is through these movements the "ordinary things" become "smashed and reconstituted" and "imbued with new meanings," as Roy argues (Roy, 2008: 32). Moreover, when I refer to "ordinary things," I do not imply these are matters of a "norm" or "normality." What I mean by "ordinary" are the everyday life struggles and strategies in what Lila Abu-Lughod calls *ethnographies of particular* (see Abu-Lughod, 1991: 473-476). I suggest that anthropological enquiries should focus on the everyday – "ordinary things" and "little events," that, of course, arise even under the extraordinary circumstances such as migration. In a similar manner, the following part of this thesis focuses on the representations of my informants' "ordinary lives" within the experience of the migration process – in a situation when something that once appeared as ordinary emerges as questionable and needs to be renegotiated, often causing the original meaning to shift. Mainly, it is in written form that these "ordinary things" and "little events" (which constantly shift in meaning) emerge as remarkable and constitute "the bleached bones of a story" of my informants' migration experiences and also of the remaining several chapters of this thesis.

5.1. Australia Arrivals: The Initial Days of Longing and Solitude in Melbourne

Several hours later, after the plane entered the air space of Australian territory, Sahil landed at the Tullmarine airport in Melbourne. Even though he tried to avoid final arrangements, he was not unprepared. Before his departure he had organized a pick-up service for overseas students offered by the *University of Melbourne*. He liked the idea that he could be picked up and brought directly to the given address free of cost. Thus, after he arrived, collected his luggage and made his way through customs, he looked for the counter where he was supposed to meet people from the pick-up service. '*…When I reached here, I couldn't find the counter, where they were waiting and I was all scared and all. But then finally I managed to find it. And I, they were actually waiting for me. So I was kind of lost… They were still waiting so that was good. And there were other students as well. And I was like dressed in suit and all that (laughter) as if I'm on a business trip or something. But I didn't want to (wear the suit) but my dad forced me to. But there were two reasons: one to reduce the weight of the luggage and then oh, you are going broad so you have to put on your best clothes and go and stuff like that. Righto,'* recalled Sahil, finishing the sentence with a common Australian slang expression. Apart from the pick-up service Sahil had also arranged a place to stay. '*I've met this guy in India during pre-departure orientation it was organized by the IDP and there I met these two guys (Anant and Bhaskar) and we decided to live together*,' informed me Sahil during an interview. Anant and Bhaskar were the only other two people that Sahil knew who studied at the University of Melbourne. For that reason he agreed to live with them, even though he felt like they weren't the kind of people he would normally want to spend his time with.

Sahil was dropped off at the corner of La Trobe and Russel Street in Melbourne's City Business District (CBD), where his new apartment was located. Sahil was impressed because "the building was so good" – classy, glass, steel apartment tower divided from the outside by the security entrance which was always locked. The fact that no strangers could penetrate the building made Sahil feel good; an attempted break-in at his apartment on Juhu Beach left him with a fear of thieves. He rang the bell and announced himself. Several minutes later a friendly Mauritian opened the door. '*It was pretty cool*,' Sahil commented on his first impressions. The apartment was located on the fourth floor and consisted of two bedrooms and a kitchen shared amongst initially

five young men, later four (Sahil, Anant, the Mauritian brothers and Bhaskar, who was after some time compelled to leave – the rest found him selfish and difficult to live with). The number of tenants was also a necessity, since it made the rent (about 380 AUD per week) more bearable. Even though Sahil found sharing a small place with a lot of other people uncomfortable, he liked the building and he enjoyed living with the Mauritian brothers. In an interview Sahil explained: '*But the building was good because we have like free gym, spa, sauna, swimming pool, barbecue area, everything*.' Sahil liked the idea of having all these facilities available at the apartment, even though he didn't really use them; he appreciated them more for the feel of luxury they evoked rather than their utilitarian value. Anant and the Mauritian brothers were the ones to organize the apartment. Anant arrived in Melbourne earlier than Sahil, and because he didn't have anywhere to stay he booked a hotel room. At the hotel he encountered the Mauritian brothers. Sahil didn't know the exact details of the encounter but he was told that: '*One of them heard the other one was talking to the receptionist about it (the housing options). So they started talking and they started looking for house together*.' Thus, Sahil's first encounter with Melbourne, the people, he met (both in Australia and in India before his departure) and his very first housing, were more an outcome of coincidence rather than a result of free choice or precise planning. These chance circumstances and some of the initial friendships made played an important role within his immigrant experience and became a starting point of his "new life" in a yet unaccustomed country.

Apart from the contacts for Anant and Bhaskar and the address of the apartment Anant had organized, Sahil obtained other contacts as well. He was given contact information both by his counselor at the IDP India office and also by his father Ravi. Ravi gave him numbers, email and physical addresses of his colleague's children and few other contacts (Sahil didn't remember the exact details). Apart from his father's friends children, in an interview Sahil remembered just another two contacts. He said: '*And he gave me numbers of two – three other people I think. One was his brother's friend – they were close friends or something. He's over here. And one was my aunt's friend, she's here and two more. I don't know, how he knew them, but he told me to come here and contact them and they'll help me out and stuff like that*.' Similar thing was done for Aashi before she left to the US for the first time. Sahil, again, wasn't sure of

the details but he assumed Aashi was given a contact of the sister of their mother's cousin with whom she stayed for few days after the arrival. I asked Sahil whether he met all the people he was recommended to contact. '*No, I didn't bother. I was like fuck it, who cares*', Sahil said.

The whole process of moving to Australia meant significant changes in Sahil's life. In one day he abandoned the people that were closest to him – his family and his friends in Mumbai, the known social patterns of interaction and behavior and the materiality that had until that point constituted his life. The material representation of his previous life became limited to what his mother Rupali, packed for him in his luggage. By the time I conducted my research, Sahil couldn't remember all the objects that he found in his luggage, but I have listed some of these objects to offer an incomplete, yet interesting picture of his baggage. When I asked Sahil what his mother packed, he replied, "normal stuff," but not really the things he needed. The luggage contained clothing – especially warm pieces (Australia's climate is significantly colder than India's), two blankets – one of them Sahil's favorite *Rajastani Rezai* and Indian style utensils (including several cooking pots, metal ware, tongs, rolling board and a pin for making *chapati*).

Sahil's journey was filled with ambiguity from the very beginning and the feeling of excitement mingled with feelings of sadness – on the one hand there was the possibility of great gain, and on the other, there was an inevitable loss of the people who matter – his *community of affection* that stayed behind. When Sahil arrived to Melbourne, he found the city strikingly clean (something my other informants noticed as well). Others had informed him of the cleanliness of the streets in "Western countries" when he was still in India. '*That's what everyone said, all these countries are so clean and all that. The air was very fresh as well, like not so much of pollution as it is in Bombay. Yeah, so it was good*,' said Sahil. Another aspect of his "new" life that he found significantly different was the weather. Even though Sahil arrived in February during the period of second half of summer in the southern hemisphere, he found the temperatures cold. In Melbourne, the average temperature in February peaks at 26°C; the minimum at night is 16°C. This might not seem so different from Mumbai's average February temperatures which range between 30 and 17 °C. Yet in comparison to Mumbai, Melbourne's weather can change quickly several times a day with large

variations in temperature; as I was informed during my orientation week at the University of Melbourne, it is as if a single day contains three seasons. '*Was it (the weather) cold?*' I asked Sahil in an interview. '*Colder than India*,' Sahil replied. '*I've never been in such a cold place. And it was like – on the same day it was cold and then it was very hot and then it goes raining again, so it was funny.*'

Sahil did not experience any major language difficulties due to his knowledge of English. He understood the majority of Melbournians and described their pronunciation as clear, but he sometimes had difficulties understanding the international students' accents. As the majority of my informants' schooling was in English and many of them spoke English at their family homes (along with other languages), there wasn't really a language barrier. In his daily encounters he found Melbournians very friendly, which for him was something new. When Sahil recalled some of these first impressions, he laughed and said: '*It was like ehh, good – very. I went to some offices and something like that and we had to greet everyone: "Hi, how are you?" like that. You don't do that in India*.' Then he continued explaining: '*So back home we just go and then say: "What do you have"? Like very rude*.' When he arrived, Sahil did not consider his behavior "rude"; he perceived it as normal. He didn't reflect on this until it was brought up by Anant. Sahil continued: '*So I was the same, I came up to a counter and then said: "I wanna do this, how can I do it." And then Anant came with me and he is like: "Oh, why were you so rude? People here are not like that, you have to greet and stuff like this."*' Anant's comment made Sahil wonder and rethink his communication habits. At first, Sahil worked on "being nice" to everyone he encountered; later he grew to regret this. These new patterns of communication, he claimed, undermined the conversation skills he had developed in India. It wasn't a matter of language difficulties; he just didn't know what to say. Thus, the first several months of his immigrant experience were marked by broken silence and experiences of solitude. Sahil couldn't express what he lacked in this new place through verbal means. He repeatedly mentioned he missed his family and his friends in Mumbai – being surrounded by people who truly cared for him. When I asked Sahil whether there was something else he missed in particular, he replied: '*I don't know. I've never been by myself, like ever*' (meaning both physically and emotionally).

Thus, rather than a lack of material surroundings, his inner solitude had "roots" in an initial absence of intimate social surroundings – an absence of a group of people who to a certain extent acted, thought and felt alike, who understood each other and mutually "cared" for each other. I do not imply that such a community could fully substitute what family meant for Sahil; it could not. Later within his immigrant experience, however, the emergence of such a group meant significant changes in Sahil's life in terms of a relationship and integration into the space, which he later started experiencing with a sense of "home." His initial anxiety and experiences of solitude stemmed from this "lack of care." He said the housemates and other people he encountered tried to care, but in his opinion, it takes time for people to truly start caring. Sahil explained: *'I didn't have anyone here, so it was kind of, ehm, lonely.'* He didn't know how long he felt this way, but a significant turning point came when he began to develop a "deeper" friendship with the Mauritian brothers. Sahil recollects: '*But after one point we became good friends with the Mauritians so I thought they started caring little bit*.' When I asked Sahil what exactly it meant to care, he answered: '*I don't know, it's just you understand, you know, that some people care for yo*u … *Probably it's also the way how I build relations with them as well. So maybe I just care only about people who care for me, something like that. I don't know. If people don't care for me then I don't give a fuck as well, so.'* '*Once you said that after all it's only the family that cares for you*,' I continued asking. '*Yeah*,' Sahil agreed. '*I mean at least my family. I mean, they wouldn't want anything bad happening to me*,' explained Sahil.

At first Sahil experienced his own translocation as largely ambiguous: traumatic, yet exciting at the same time. The translocation meant in many ways the "deconstruction" of the known social ties and patterns of communication and behavior he was accustomed to, rather than longing for particular physical spaces (which doesn't mean they wouldn't have significance on their own). Sahil also felt the urge to rethink his familiar ways of interaction for they did not seem appropriate in Australia. However, after starting his studies with the University of Melbourne, he was subjected to interaction with other Australian and international student and over time he adopted the cosmopolitan identity of a highly educated, skilled Melbournian of transmigrant background. Thus, for Sahil, school wasn't only an institution that provided education;

it was a site of establishing friendships and the site of his initial integration into Melbournian lifestyle.

Another important shift in Sahil's new transmigrant life emerged when he developed closer friendship with Mauritian brothers he shared the flat with. Ever since Sahil began his studies at the *University of Melbourne* with the Faculty of Business and Economics his social network significantly broadened. As I will attempt to show in the following section, the feelings of anxiety and "loneliness" weakened parallel to the emergence of the larger social network of people Sahil developed vibrant friendships with, and whom eventually became his supporting Melbournian *community of affection*. This *community of affection* played a crucial role in the growth of Sahil's ties to Melbourne. With time it helped him to perceive the city as a second home, with the closest members of the network composing the "second family" abroad, which significantly influenced his decision to stay and allowed him to imagine living on a more permanent basis in Australia.

5.2. Melbournian Communities of Affection: Friends and "Family" in a Home Away from Home

One early autumn evening on March 7, 2009, in Melbourne, I got an irresistible craving for something sweet. Sahil suggested getting *Soan Papdi* – indulgent square shaped sweets made out of two types of flour (*besan* – chickpea flour and *maida* – plain wheat flour), sugar, ghee (refined Indian butter), milk, cardamom and pistachios, which are crisp and flaky in texture and melt on tongue like fairy floss. We walked from Sahil's house on Bouverie Street to the closest Indian store, located on Elizabeth Street, a 15 minute walk. As we walked, Sahil recollected his initial days in Melbourne and laughed at the memory of how he used to walk to school this way nearly everyday with Anant, Bhaskar. This was a much longer walk from their flat at Russel and La Trobe Street. They could have cut through Swanston Street, but in those days they didn't know these things. Sahil said that someone showed Anant the path through Elizabeth Street, so they walked there for months, carrying heavy books (as Sahil emphasized) until later he when he better learned the special organization of the city. He laughed about those early days and felt silly about not exploring other paths back then. He was a different person now – comfortable with his interaction skills, which he confidently exhibited at

classes at the *University of Melbourne*, proud of his cosmopolitan Melbournian life. The city changed for him as well – now he was a person with Melbournian history, he knew the streets, buildings, parks, nearby shops, he was familiar with the local infrastructure and how "things" worked, he had his friends here, and the longer he stayed, the more the cityscape became imbued with his own memories. When we returned to Sahil's flat on Bouverie Street, I made a pot of milky, spiced *chai* – something Sahil's mom never made, even though it is often perceived as a "typical" culinary representation of India within the global imageries of "Indianness." As we drank the tea, we took a bite of *Soan Papdi* and the powdery, white sweetness glued our mouths. *Soan Papdi* was not of the same elaborate taste here like the one Sahil's mom used to buy in *Bandra*, Bombay. We contemplated the box of sweet disappointment. Neither the sweets nor anything else was the same here in Melbourne; everything felt smashed and reconstituted and then imbued with new meaning.

The University of Melbourne Parville Campus, Grattan Street entrance. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

Of course, the changes in Sahil's life didn't happen overnight; the changes requires time and sometimes even significant determination. However, Sahil was determined; he wanted to belong to this place, and the more he wanted, the more he embraced the cosmopolitan patterns that allowed him to be both unique in terms of his background and his personality and at the same time merge undistinguished from Melbournians. In this chapter I suggest that Sahil's (and my other informants)

tendencies to develop transmigrant, cosmopolitan identities stemmed partly out of their individual experiences (and personalities), but they were largely supported by their individual migration journeys (they weren't joining a community – they had to create their own) and shaped by the *University of Melbourne* as a primarily site of integration into Melbournian life (or other educational institutions for minor portion of my informants). I suggest that the open-minded, multicultural environment of the university, offering respect and guidance and celebrating the diversity of both students and stuff, contributed to my informants' development of cosmopolitan, transmigrant life strategies in Melbourne. Moreover, they were subjected to daily interactions with many other local and international students and stuff that shaped their ideas of how they should establish and promote their new selves. Sahil liked to take one of his former Australian lecturers as his own example, for he admired how confidently and intriguingly he spoke in his lectures, how smartly he dressed, how successful his career was and that despite his busy lifestyle, he could still manage to escape work in order to spend his vacation at Saint Martin in the Caribbean, where he watched from beach the planes filled with tourist land astonishingly close.

In this respect, the university was not only an educational institution but also a significant site of social encounters and integration into a Melbournian life. As I have suggested previously, in the beginning of his stay in Melbourne, Sahil's closest friendships consisted of his flat mates and were to a large extent situational. Some of these initial friendships became important even in a later phase of Sahil's life in Melbourne (friendship with the Mauritian brothers), while others weakened. In contrast, the social network that has emerged through the *University of Melbourne* was a product of mutual active interaction, communication and shared sympathies. It was through the *University of Melbourne* that Sahil started developing relationship with some his closest friends – Shiv and Dhruv, through which he established friendships with most my informants that constituted the core of Sahil's social network in 2009. For these reasons, in the following chapter, I will elaborate more on the emergence of Sahil's social network – a circle of close friends that helped him establish and develop closer ties to Melbourne, a place that later became his second home.

Interestingly, Sahil made few direct contacts with other individuals that led to closer friendships, but this was due to his initial shyness and difficulties with

interactions he mainly encountered during his first year in Australia. When I attempted to reconstruct the development of Sahil's social network in 2009 he himself was surprised how few people he has met through direct contact; he never really mulled over it before. After looking at my graph of the establishment his social network he noted: *'Now if I went to uni, this chart would be different like here I just made contact with few people. Because at that point, I used to be friends with only…people I grew up with. For example, people who lived in my building or people I went to school with or collage. And apart from that like I've never became friends with their friends. And yeah, that was the first time I have left home. I was never alone and all and I was very shy as well, even as a kid. So that's why maybe you know like had direct contact only with two or three of them. Hey, but then I had a direct contact with more people after, but yeah it was after a long time. So yeah, if I went to uni now, I would have direct contact with more people because I'm not you know, like so shy anymore and stuff. So it would be different I think, I would have more direct contacts like that.'*

The "two or three" direct contacts Sahils mentions are Anant, whom he met already from India (that's why he counted only partly), Shiv from Sri Lanka and Dhruv from Chennai, India whom he met in Melbourne. Shiv and Dhruv were two other Master's students of the Faculty of Economics Sahil met directly and who became more significant in his life in Melbourne. All the other individuals that later became important in Sahil's life resulted in his previous friendships with these two young men. Interestingly, Sahil has known most of the people that he later became friends with from the *University of Melbourne* as well, but then they were more or less acquaintances he used to encounter in his classes. He established stronger social and emotional ties with them later through his already existing friendships. Meeting and becoming friends with friend's friends was quite symptomatic for the rise of Sahil's social network in Melbourne and not only Sahil's but also my other informants' social ties. Thus, meeting someone as a classmate did not automatically lead to disclosing and developing mutually shared sympathies. These emerged when the individuals became embedded in a joint social network of common friends. If I were to compare this type of networking with social anthropology, I would say that Sahil developed his Melbournian *community of affection* through a "snowball method" – in other words, his closest friends were "discovered" due to Shiv and Dhruv whom Sahil met at the university, and through their

circles of friends. At the same time, only some of the friends' friends became significant in Sahil's later social circles; others remained acquaintances.

Thus, apart from the circle of friends that arose around Sahil's first flat on the cross of Russel and La Trobe Street which included mainly Anant, (Bhaskar for a while) and the Mauritian brothers, Sahil developed a whole range of relationships through the *University of Melbourne*. As I suggested previously, Sahil's social network at the university expanded around Shiv and Dhruv, which led to the development of two different subgroups of friends that were partly interconnected. First, I will focus on the subgroup of friends arising around Shiv. Sahil met Shiv at the university in March 2006 and they soon became friends. Through Shiv, Sahil met another two individuals Sandeep from Delhi in April 2006 (who first become friends several months later) and Ram from Bangalore in the autumn of 2006. Ram was also friends with Shiv and Sahil's housemate Anant, so they used to spend time together and cook dinners in Sahil and Anant's apartment. Because of Sandeep, Sahil befriended Rohit, whom he met in May 2006 and who became an important person in Sahil's later social network derived from Dhruv since Rohit and Dhruv became close friends as well. Rohit and Sandeep knew each other already from Delhi and apart from attending the same classes at university they also shared an apartment in Melbourne.

Sahil explained: *So Sandeep and Rohit were friends, housemates as well. And (sarcastic quiet laughter) Rohit, ehm, okay wanted to join my group in week 11 and we were supposed to be in a group by week 3. So, (laughs) Rohit was not interested in studying at all.*

'That why he has "PhD"'? I asked. (The boys used to sarcastically joke about Rohit having PhD because of his general disinterest in school.)

Yeah, Sahil confirmed chuckling and continued talking: *'So he came to us like on the last day for submission and like Sandeep introduced me to him. So I know Rohit through Sandeep but we became friends through Dhruv. Because Dhruv and Rohit were friends. They became friends later, like differently.'*

Sahil continued*: And I was, but I didn't become friends with Sandeep instantly actually. So we were just working in a group and then fuck off. But then, I think again after one or two semesters, we worked again together and that's when we became friends.*

When Sandeep and Sahil became friends, Shiv befriended Sandeep as well. Before that, they just knew each other as acquaintances. By the second half of 2008, both Shiv and Sandeep left Melbourne. Shiv, I believe, moved to Sydney and Sandeep returned to India. When I wondered in an interview why Sandeep left, Sahil alleged: *He (Sandeep) already was, he was rich. He had, his father had business and all. He was very lazy as well, so he didn't wanna do things on his own. He wanted servants and all*.[12] Even though, these close friends of Sahil left, the social ties remained. Due to his friendship with Shiv (and these other young men of prevailingly Indian origin), Sahil developed closer friendships with other nationals that used to meet in his courses: a Singaporean called Lili, Penelope from France, Chor from Thailand and Kerem from Turkey. Apart from these friendships by early 2009 – after two years of living in Melbourne, Sahil developed significant amount of interactions with people of many nationalities (as well as his other *desi* friends). However, the previously mentioned individuals represent the Sahil's closest social circle, but constitute only a fragment of his relations and interactions with other Melbournians.

Lili, Penelope, Chor and Kerem met Sahil during the group assignments at the university in July 2007. Kerem approached Sahil to join his and his friend's group in Strategic Management class. In an interview Kerem recollected the event while joking about it: '*So, because we already formed a group and we were missing only one person. So he was just walking around. He seemed so lonely, so I said give him a chance*' (laughter). Penelope was part of this group along with an Australian girl called Samantha and another girl of Indian origin named Priyanka. While Kerem was keen to work with Sahil, Priyanka protested for she thought he was lazy (according to Kerem). Samantha wasn't fond of Priyanka, so she supported Kerem, and because they needed somebody with closer knowledge of finance, which Sahil had. Strategic management group assignments required closer regular cooperation on weekly basis and resulted in establishing closer relations between these individuals. In this class Sahil developed a more profound friendship with Kerem, which enabled him to develop friendships with Chor (she was Kerem's girlfriend at one point) and about year later Kerem's housemates two Indian sisters Savera and Katyayani (who later became close friends of Dhruv's

[12] In India, many middle class and especially higher class families hire house cooks and house cleaners to help to maintain the household. Even Sahil's family hired a women, who helped with kitchen and house work (but the cooking was done generally by Sahil's mother Rupali.

social circle). Penelope became fond of Sahil mainly after the graduation. When she first met him in the Strategic Management class she felt ambiguous about him. She found him cute, but she also found him annoying and immature when he attempted to flirt with her. After the course experience, they lost contact for a while.

Nevertheless, Sahil remained friends with her close friends Kerem, Samantha and Lili, so Penelope kept running into him at various social events. By the time they finished the Master's program, both Penelope and Sahil changed their approaches and became good friends. Penelope said: '*I don't know we might caught up via different friends and then, I don't know, he was different. And then you know, step by step. Like it took a while but then I was like ah, it's quite nice now and I, like, you know, we share more things probably…He was different, I was probably different from what I was in uni…Probably the experience here because what I understood is that, he was living with his parents before coming to Australia. So I guess he was quite childish at the beginning but then you know when you start living by yourself far from your family, you just grow up like everybody else.*' Also Chor, wasn't very keen on being friends with Sahil at first. When she recollected that time in the past she laughed and explained that first Sahil was "chasing" Penelope and second he made her good Thai friend, who share class with Sahil cry every week (due to the misunderstanding in communication). Later, she got to know him better and felt like Sahil started to act differently. Eventually, Sahil became close friends with Kerem and Penelope, which made Chor to reconsider her first opinion and she developed close friendship with Sahil. When Chor and I discussed the development of her friendship with Sahil, she said: '*He's my close friend now. I love him…Yeah, he's a really good guy, he's really open minded and I love some of his qualities…*'

Similarly to Chor and Penelope, even Lili (who was Chor's mentor when she first came to Melbourne) knew Sahil for a long time before they became close friends. They had friends in common and often met with each other at the university. When I asked Lili how they met, she giggled loudly. '*Oh that's really funny…Actually, you know what's the funniest thing, his good friend Dhruv was the first person I met in uni. But turned out to be a bit of a, ehm, I won't say,'* said Lili, suggesting her disapproval of one of Sahil's best friends. '*I always saw Sahil there, he was friends with my friends and he hang out with Shiv all the time. And I knew Shiv because he was always smiley, always*

had a nice word for people and he was really really nice. And I just like, ok, one of the things I did when I was at uni, I used to bake a lot. I was actually apparently quite famous for baking stuff so…I used to like, you know, bring my cookies, bring my muffins or my cake or whatever. A lot of my friends I'd offer them cookies or cakes and stuff. Like I knew Shiv but I didn't know Sahil and I didn't know any of that other people Sahil hang out with. So I used to offer Shiv cookies…I'd make a few so, I would offer my friends but Sahil used to hate me because I wasn't giving him cookies', explained Lili. Moreover, in those early days Sahil had insulted Lili by calling her in Hindi *saali kutti kumini* (damn bitch) under the belief that she wouldn't understand (Lili is Singaporean of Chinese-Indonesian origin). However Lili understood, for she had a personal interest in India and knew a fair bit of Hindi. Later, this *faux pas* became a popular joke amongst these close friends. Lili got to know Sahil better in a class on consumers' behavior and established strong relationship with him through Chor, Penelope and Samantha. Lili felt that her and Sahil's friendship became more profound during a trip together with Chor and Penelope to Tasmania in 2008. As Sahil's friendship with Lili strengthened, he started to interact more with Raj, an Indian, who grew up in Doha, Qatar (and was Lili's good friend and housemate in 2009) and whom Sahil has know already for about two years from the university but then they were more or less acquaintances. So again, in the case of friendship with prevailingly non-Indian nationals, a shared social network seems to be crucial for developing and establishing friendships. In other words: in Melbourne, one commonly makes new friends through his or her preexisting friends' circles, regardless of whatever the "first sight" impressions may be.

Desh-Videsh Groceries Store, Sydney Rd., Melbourne. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

Sahil's most important social circle arose around meeting Dhruv – an Indian from Chennai, who was one of the few direct contacts he made through the University of Melbourne. Sahil met Dhruv in March 2006 at the University of Melbourne, but it took another four months for them to become friends. Similarly to cases mentioned above, Sahil and Dhruv became friends because they were both "hanging around with Shiv." When I asked Sahil how he became friends with Dhruv, Sahil started laughing and explained that Dhruv used to call him all the time, which later resulted in friendship. Sahil recalls: '*He started calling me after in a second semester…I think Shiv was working with Dhruv or something – or something like that. So they were hanging out a bit. So through Shiv…*' At that time, Sahil and Shiv were spending a significant amount of time at the oldest building at the University of Melbourne campus – the 1888 Building, which they jokingly used to call "home." '*So Dhruv and Shiv were working on one group assignment,'* Sahil continued. '*So Dhruv used to meet Shiv in that building sometime and I used be with Shiv that time, studying or something, not studying but just killing time and then through Shiv, like we all already knew each other like me and Dhruv but then we spoke little bit more and all that*,' explained Sahil. Through the friendship with Dhruv, in spring of 2008 Sahil developed social ties and friendships with three other *desis* Vivek from Coinbatore, Rahul from Chennai and Dhiraj from Mumbai, which expanded Sahil's social circle "beyond" the University of Melbourne (Apart from the Mauritian brothers and much later the Indian sisters Katyayani and Savera, all of Sahil's friends attended the University of Melbourne.) Dhruv and Vivek were childhood friends from India, who lived together in Melbourne for the entire time Sahil has known them. Rahul and Vivek knew each other from the *Swinburne University of Technology*, and at some point Rahul was staying in Vivek and Dhruv's apartment on Lygon Street. Dhiraj met and made friends with Vivek and Dhruv at a call centre, where they all worked at one point in 2008. Sahil established closer friendships with these people when they started "hanging out" in Vivek and Dhruv's apartment on Lygon Street. They joked and cooked dinners together, but most importantly, they used to meet to play Tekken (literally the "Iron Fist" – a series of Japanese, PlayStation, fighting games published and developed by Namco). Unlike Dhruv, both Sahil and Vivek found themselves very competitive with themselves and through teasing each other while playing Tekken, they established very strong friendship. By the time I met

Sahil in second half of 2008, Dhruv and Vivek were Sahil's closest friends – family, as he often referred to them. Family in a home away from home – people he could rely on, people he felt comfortable with, people, who cared.

6. Desh-Videsh – Identity of Indian Transmigrants in "Multicultural Melbourne"

'*It's kind of confusing but people live in so many places. How do you really say which is home? It's kind of hard. Because everywhere you go, you kind of make a home there and then you kind of move on but I guess like, yeah, home can travel around depending on what attachments you have to that place*.'

(Interview Lili)

'Home, in short, is increasingly: "no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived."'

(Berger 1984: 64 in Rapport and Dawson, 1998: 27)

In this chapter, I attempt to give a closer insight into the everyday life negotiations of identity of my informants in Melbourne. As I have suggested in the previous chapter, the rise of a diverse, transmigrants' social network of friends (*community of affection*), helped Sahil and many of his other friends to establish himself in Melbourne and start perceiving the city as a second home abroad with his closest circle of friends becoming his second family abroad. After their arrival, many of my informants renegotiated their existing lifestyles in the new context and modified their demeanor in both public and some private spheres became contested by the migration experience. However, in this chapter, I will primarily focus on the cosmopolitan transmigrant identities that my informants had developed by the time I conducted my fieldwork in the beginning of 2009. I will show how this relatively privileged group of young intellectuals (a result of university student migration) developed vibrant cosmopolitan lifestyles in Melbourne – in a city which is frequently titled and characterized as a "multicultural" city. I will attempt to examine

Playing Tekken at Vivek and Dhruv's new flat in Camberwell, Melbourne. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

these cosmopolitan approaches primarily in terms of their changing perceptions of "home" and their lifestyle in Melbourne. These cosmopolitan transmigrants do not necessarily wish to hide their own differences in behaviour (they proudly refer to them in terms of their background) but they do so selectively. In this context, I will offer a critique of the past anthropological perceptions of "culture" as of discrete, enclosed systems, which under the scope of migration stand out as clearly indefensible. Finally, I will show how the new cosmopolitan approaches of my informants are associated with the life in cities and overall "openness" as opposed to "tradition," villages in India and perseverance of "conservative attitudes." I will begin with a literary nonfictional representation of Rahul's life as I knew and perceived him during my life in Melbourne in 2009. Even though this portrait is specific to Rahul, in many respects it resembles my other informants' cosmopolitan lives.

6.1. Melbournian Lifestyles, Melbournian homes

Rahul is a Melbournian. He gets up before seven in the morning, brushes his teeth with Colgate Triple Action, irons his clothes and takes a shower. He skips breakfast to watch the news, and by 7:30 he is already out of the house. He travels 17 minutes on a Metlink train connecting the western suburbs with the inner city and spends most of the day at NAB (National Australia Bank). His time at work is interposed by a brief lunch break. He generally eats at various bistros near the office. Rahul loves spicy flavours but he cares little about where he grabs his lunch: Indian or Thai restaurant, Malaysian bistro, Nando's or Subway. Rahul's week resembles the seven day routine of many young professionals of the city: Monday to Friday he is busy working, on the weekends he goes partying in clubs.

I met him at the junction of Bourke and Spencer Street. He nodded his head from the opposite side of the street and rushed across the road, fading from sight amongst the moving heads and limbs of the anonymous crowd. Two minutes later he reappeared again, taking me by surprise: "Here you are," I said. He responded with his regular: "Hi, how are you?" and kissed me on the cheek.

Rahul was sipping a Starbucks latte and holding a cigarette with his right thumb and middle finger. An impersonal female voice announced that another train was about to depart from Melbourne's Southern Cross Station. Passengers' voices melted into the

singular buzz of a post-industrial human hive. As the tobacco slowly disintegrated into ash, Rahul gently tapped the cigarette end with his middle finger allowing the ash to break off. He was in his mid-twenties, a casual business type. He had just finished his daily errands for NAB. His clothes were a palette of greys and blacks which faded into his sandalwood complexion and charcoal hair: the derby shoes, trousers with nearly invisible stripes and his woollen RDX double-breasted jacket (four of his other Indian friends and acquaintances including Sahil happened to own the same model). Similarly to other Melbournians, Rahul wore only a shirt underneath his jacket; no cardigans, jumpers or polo necks. Such fashion appeared to me as symptomatic in a city where the weather is moody and literally changes out of the blue. In my eyes, Rahul was a true cosmopolitan. After leaving his "beloved motherland" of India, he adapted to the lifestyle in Melbourne with considerable ease. He embodied the trans-national paradigm, a person flexibly living within multiple nation-state territories leaving his mind open to the new ventures.

When I got to know Dhruv, Vivek, Sahil and their closest friends in 2008–2009, like Rahul they shared similar lifestyles of fresh university graduates. By this time Sahil had moved out from his student apartment on the cross of Russel and La Trobe Street and had organized his first fully independent living in a studio-apartment on Bouverie Street in Carlton five minutes walking distance from the *University of Melbourne*. He liked the convenience of the location for he worked part-time as a tutor for the *University of Melbourne* teaching BPA – Business Process Analysis at the time. Not long after Sahil returned to Australia following his annual trip to India in January and February 2009, he lost his job due to the university's saving measures as a response to worldwide financial crises. Consequently, Sahil struggled for employment while dreaming of working a graduate position with PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) as a business analyst. As the application processes dragged along, Sahil simultaneously searched for part time employment. Due to the financial crises and perhaps his immigrant background (a topic my informants often discussed), in the remaining time of my research he didn't succeed getting a career oriented employment in his field, which left him split between unemployment and working part-time jobs. Sahil didn't want to work in a call centre where his friends worked (he hated the idea of a "cultural *cliché*" of being an Indian from a call centre), therefore, he chose a different strategy and

worked for over a month as a Greenpeace Frontline Fundraiser. Coming from Bombay, Sahil found raising the environmental consciousness as very important. Yet, the job did not satisfy his career expectations and he was looking for something business oriented. Moreover, his best friends used to tease him about his Greenpeace involvement for they associated the job with radical environmentalists, or even worse, the hippie movement (which seemed to be associated with anarchy, dirt-impurity and drugs).

View overlooking Sahil's apartment building on Bouverie St, Melbourne. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

In his free time, Sahil attended various social events organized around his different friends circles, which I introduced in the previous chapter. He divided his free time amongst his international social circle around the University of Melbourne, his *desi* friends and my social circles (consisting of variety of international students around the university). Only rarely did Sahil attempt to "mix" these three different crowds, saying he didn't like to divide his attention, although there were occasions during which these circles of friends intersected (almost all of them knew each other well). Sahil felt most comfortable around Dhruv and Vivek, whom he considered part of his second family abroad. For most of the time I knew them, Dhruv and Vivek shared a spacious, two-bedroom flat on Lygon Street, Carlton North close to the beginning of Brunswick East. The flat was located on the first floor of a plain, tidy looking apartment building. The outside staircase wound along the back of the building, hiding an enclosed square yard with medium sized swimming pool in the middle. Apart from Dhruv and Vivek there were usually one or two other people sharing the flat and many friends, generally *desis* visited on everyday basis. After entering, people removed their shoes and placed them by the door (a common habit in India for reasons of hygiene, similar to some European countries such as Czech Republic) and walked around the flat barefoot. Usually no appointments were made; people kept coming in and out. '*You just walk in*

any time you need to. We are pretty close friends when it comes to that,' commented Vivek. The living area shared the kitchen corner divided by a bar, and faced a balcony next to the main entrance and sitting area, an area dominated by two well-used sofas and a TV with PlayStation. The usual visits consisted of cooking, chatting and playing Tekken or later Tennis (with the sessions sometimes lasting up to 4-5 hours). In the Lygon Street flat, they constituted a second family abroad: together they shared food, squished together in the two sofas in front of the TV, they shared their stories, ideas and struggles of everyday life, ready to support each other (both materially and immaterially). More importantly, during these evenings of teasing and laughter they showed they cared. Vivek explained: '*We (meaning Vivek and Dhruv) treat him (Sahil) like he's part of the house and he treats us the same so we both look at it the same way. We see them (closest friends) as part of family. We are all here for each other. So I would say that is family or friends, yeah*.' With time and significantly through sharing these moments with people who cared and who mattered, Sahil started to experience and comprehend Melbourne as home – a "home away from home," yet one he appreciated and planned to live his life in.

6.2. Cosmopolitan Cities and Travelling Homes

Sahil had two homes, one in India where his family lived, and one in Melbourne, Australia. The majority of Sahil's friends also spoke about their plurality of homes (both *desi* and international transmigrant friends' circles). Ram perceived home as his family house in Bangalore, India, yet at the same time as an Australian citizen he felt increasingly at home in Melbourne, Australia. '*It is home (Melbourne, Australia). Looks like I have two homes now. One in India and one in Australia,'* concluded Ram. For some especially, those growing up with multicultural experience (e.g. Lili and Raj), home was nearly of an immaterial character, others had two (or more) homes with particular physical localities in their mind: home where they lived in Australia and home of origin, (generally) where their loved ones and family lived. Thus, many of my informants understandings of home were constituted more, in terms of *communities of affection* than in terms of physical locality: close friends and family. Singaporean Lili fittingly expresses this understanding of home when she explains: '*Home is where your heart is…Oh you know, home is Singapore. Not, I mean, not because I was born there*

but more because my family's there. And I'm very close to my family so, you know, that's where my attachment is, so home is where my heart is, which is Singapore. But then, you know, I came to Melbourne, I started studying here and I made a life for myself and made good friends and you know, I formed attachments here and I realized that, yeah, you reach a state where, you know, Melbourne is home as well. Because it's way you have your life, you have your friends here, like people who might not be a biological family but…The really good friends you make here, they are your family unit.' And such type of thinking seemed symptomatic, not only exclusively for Lili but significantly for all my other informants of Indian background.

Using the example of my understandings of home, I attempted to suggest that this particular group of student migrants has tendencies to understand their identities as cosmopolitan. Bruce Robbins argues that the term cosmopolitanism should be extended to '*transnational experiences that are particular rather than universal and that are unprivileged—indeed, often coerced'* (Robbins, 1998: 1). Most of my informants voluntarily decided to migrate – their journeys were not coerced – and while they can be understood as in terms of privileged and unprivileged, their stories mirror the particular transnational experiences of other migrants. Whether privileged or unprivileged, they found themselves in "transition" – in the "interstices." Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge, and Chakrabarty suggest that: '*Cosmopolitanism, in its wide and wavering nets, catches something of our need to ground our sense of mutuality in conditions of mutability, and to learn to live tenaciously in terrains of historic and cultural transition…As we negotiate this transitional territory, we often find ourselves in the interstices of the old and the new, confronting the past as the present*' (Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge, and Chakrabarty, 2000: 580). Thus, following this argument, cosmopolitanism describes a situation of constant change, a multiplicity of meanings that are constantly renegotiated as one moves through time. Apart from being a mutable and somewhat frontier experience, cosmopolitanism was described through the notion of multiplicity (that is indeed connected to the previous argument). Robbins argues that instead of focusing on the "ideal of detachment," the actually existing cosmopolitanism is a reality of (re) attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at distance (Robbins, 1998: 3). Moreover, according to Robbins the multiplicity of attachment doesn't necessarily mean connection to place, it arises more as a connection to Earth (Robbins, 1998: 3). Also A.

A. Long shows that the cosmopolitan etymologically stems out of ancient Greek words *kosmos* (universe) and *polites – polis* (city) to signify "citizen of the world" (see Long, 50: 2008) but at the same it indicates that the rise of this ideological stream is connected to the rise of early cityscapes. Despite the understandings of the self as of a "citizen of the world," the notion and a familiar knowledge of a particular place is crucial for establishing social networks of my informants' character and my informants indeed developed relations to the place, however being surrounded by close friends constituted a priority. Particular places matter, but one is no longer confined to a singular home – familiar places and homes arise as multiple attachments. As a result of transnational experiences, increasingly more people living in cosmopolitan cities tend to associate themselves more as citizens of the world than members of a single nation-state, which is thought that also Lili elaborated on, when she said: '*You can move half way across the world for love. You can move because you got a really great job across the world and, you know, there is so much cross-cultural assimilation. I think like eventually is going to be a citizen of the world*.' Also, Sahil's father noted during one of our discussions that, perhaps it would take another 100 years but one day the humankind will be same (referring to migration and marriages in between persons across nations).

In Raj's opinion, the physical place didn't really matter. *'I've never formed that much of an emotional attachment with any place,'* announced Raj who's visited most of world's continents and lived in three large metropolitan cities in three different countries. Raj's grandparents came from Kerala in South India and settled in Bombay, where he was born. Two months after Raj was born in late 70's his mother and father moved to Middle East, where his father got a job as an engineer in oil industry. Raj grew up and finished high school in Doha, Qatar, subsequently moving to Bombay in order to study his undergraduate degree. After completing his studies he returned to Doha and worked for about year and half. Wanting to study a management oriented degree, Raj decided to move and finish his master's degree in Business and IT in Melbourne, Australia, where he has lived ever since. Raj though of Melbourne in terms of home, yet when I asked him what home was, he said: *'It's not a place. I won't go to some desert or some village or something to live my life. I'm not made that way...I prefer to live my life in a metro (metropolitan) city, where they have normal joints available, shopping stuff available, things that you see everywhere and anywhere. I find*

it very easy to integrate into the place but where you have a good set of people around it, that's where home is. And that might not necessarily have to be a constant thing as well. I can be in one place, have a good set of people around me, that's home for them, can go to another place in another country, have another set of people around me, that's where home is.' Thus, in some of my informants' imaginations of home, physical places mattered more for some and less for others, but what stands out is the significance of a social network of close friends or family members and the multiplicity of homes.

Moreover, it seems that people who came to Melbourne with the determination and hopes to live there on a more permanent basis tended to create a "multiplicity of homes" – a multiplicity of *communities of affection*, for those who didn't intend on staying for longer than for the university course (which amongst my informants was true for sisters Savera and Katyayani, who always planned to return to India), Melbourne became a transitory place of dwelling that would remain always familiar but they perceived India as home. When I asked Savera, what she considered the home, she replied that, for her home is something linked to the city (urban life – similarly to Raj) but most of all it is the "smell of Delhi in winters." Savera briefly pondered and said: '*Ah, it smells of mist and dust but at the same time it's, because we don't have any autumn, the trees are still green and there are some trees, which are flowers, so it smells really nice and crisp. Ehm, and home to me is, smell of Delhi in winters and that sound of coolers in summers...And what else and the chaos. That's home for me – my dogs, ehm the sense of being somewhere, where people know who I am, you know. And people can see me and say, oh my God you've changed, you know, the only people who can say I've changed are the ones who see me from the time I was a kid and yeah, so, that's home for me*,' said Savera.

6.3. Beyond Culture: "Modern Cities" and "Traditional Villages"

In the previous section I suggested that most of my informants who chose to stay in Melbourne developed fairly cosmopolitan lifestyles that embraced a multiplicity of places they related to as home. They grew to respect people of different national backgrounds that was projected in their social networks and understood themselves more in sense of cosmopolitan inhabitants of Melbourne. Some felt linked more to their Indian background, some less, but they all had a sense of their transitional identities,

which they didn't experience as "abnormal," because the population in Melbourne is largely composed of migrants from all over the world. For example, Raj experienced his Indian background as something he related to – a familiar, "cosy" commonality, something he shared with his closest friends. I suggest that earlier anthropological static conceptions of migration in which an immigrant is pictured as an uprooted, disturbed individual, abandoning the old patterns of life and painfully learning new language in a host territory no longer suffices (also see Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1992: 1; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999: 73; Malkki, 1992: 24-44), especially in the case of educated and well-established transmigrant circles with which this study focuses on. Instead, I propose following Basch's, Glick Schiller's, and Szanton Blanc's argument that: *Now a new kind of migrating population is emerging, composed of those whose networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field.*' (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1992: 1)

Malkki understands these tendencies as stemming from "sedentarist metaphysics" (see Malkki, 1992: 31-33) and she argues that: '*This sedentarism is not inert. It actively territorializes our identities, whether cultural or national…it also directly enables vision of territorial displacement as pathological*' (Malkki, 1992: 31). Similarly, Andrew Dawson and Nigel Rapport have pointed out that: '*Even the conventional anthropological understanding has been that to be at home was tantamount to being environmentally fixed. In the construction and promulgation of essential cultures, societies, nations and ethnic groups, being at home in an environment meant being, if not stationary, than at least centred*.' (Rapport and Dawson, 1998: 21) Likewise Gupta and Fergusson, criticize this "statically-holistic" understanding of cultures and national societies into fragmented, discrete places of disparate and enclosed human societies out of which stems the rupture between inhabitants of different nation-states (Gupta, Fergusson, 1992: 6, 7). According to Gupta and Fergusson, the concept of culture emerges as problematic for it conceptually enables one to imagine society in terms of separate, demarcated entities associated with "people," "tribe," "nation," etc. (Gupta and Fergusson, 1997b: 1) These ideas were also supported by the later development of the concept of "a culture" as a system of meaning, which has only contributed to perception of a cultures as of integrated totalities, each of them operating

on different holistic logic (Gupta and Fergusson, 1997b: 1-2). Yet with a growing interest in transnational process, this model becomes indefensible. As Gupta and Fergusson attempted to show, such perceptions of culture fall apart in situations of increased mobility when they write that: '*The fiction of cultures as discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete spaces becomes implausible for those who inhabit the borderlands. Related to border in-habitants are those who live a life of border crossings – migrant workers, nomads, and members of the transnational business and professional elite'* (Gupta; Fergusson, 1992: 7).

Thus, deriving a comprehension of immigrants' identities from the imagery of the static home defies the portrayal of mobility and confines the identity within national, ethnic or cultural boundaries. I suggest that in this generalized "political map of the world" the uniqueness of individual identities dissolves and is reduced to putative testimonies of "discrete cultures," "national entities" and "ethnic groups" unable to capture the diverse lifestyles my informants and many others have developed within their migrant experience. Raj identified himself as "Indian" mainly because he was an Indian national; distinguishing groups of people on the basis of a "national order" still seemed symptomatic amongst most of the Melbournians. Raj explained: '*If somebody asked me, I'd say yes, I'm Indian but yeah, I don't identify myself that way because I guess I'm Indian because I have all these Indian, you know, things about me. That's not the reason that I'd say I'm Indian because I have an Indian passport, that's pretty much it. That's why if somebody asks me, where you are from, I say India. But when I speak to somebody I can usually tell, what they'd expect to see of me. So if I'm talking with an Arab, I'll change my accent slightly to Arabic as well. I'll throw in few Arab words. If I'm with an Indian, I'll say stuff in Hindi, I'll speak in Hindi. If I'm with an Australian, I'll talk about alcohol (bursts in laughter). No but I mean, basically, wherever – whichever part (of the world) the person is from, I very quickly try to mimic the way that person talks to me and I talk to them that way. Of course I'm keeping my ideas and keeping the way that I am as well, not completely change into a different person… Indian, just because it says on my passport*.' Thus, for Raj, didn't understand his "Indianess" as a homogenous cultural background that defined who he was and that would differentiate him from other nationals, he saw it more as linked to a nationally

divided political world order: common thinking linked to the imagination of cultures as discrete entities copying the borders of singular nation-states.

And this is precisely what stands out not only from my informants' imaginations of home but also in their lives as transitional negotiations of identity. My informants considered themselves as educated, cosmopolitan, city inhabitants of immigrant experience. My network of Melbournian *desi* friends associated and related more to different nationals who shared a similar experience education and lifestyle than the less educated Indian nationals (who came through different types of immigration). They complained about not being distinguished by the other Melbournians from different *desi* groups – especially those they found too confined to tradition, those who were less educated and unprepared to develop a more cosmopolitan lifestyles, especially the ones from the villages. In the introduction to this thesis, I mentioned Sahil and Rahul's conversation concerning their travels in which they expressed a slightly negative approach towards the Indian origin, usually Punjabi taxi drivers, especially those coming from villages. When I was in India, in early 2009, this deliberate distinction mediated mostly through jokes and physically manifested in not sharing friendships with the less educated, less cosmopolitan people of Indian origin became a little bit clearer.

One day in Bombay, on a trip with Sahil's parents to visit a Buddhist pagoda, Sahil's father Ravi elaborated on the topic of the "civilization clash." Ravi said that viewing "Indian culture" as being tied to the tradition was in his perspective the result of a conflict between modernity and western lifestyle. Variations of this thought seemed to be a common to my informants as well. Thus, "Indian culture" and to a certain respect India – the country of origin became associated with tradition, and conservativeness referring to the past as opposed to Australia, the country of dwelling associated with modernity, progress, western lifestyle and openness. Of course, this is rather schematic and simplifying perspective, but I argue that the main conflicts in the process of negotiating ones identity arose from this symbolic distinction. At the same time, being Indian was experienced with pride but with the imagery of a "modern, cosmopolitan Indian" who has negotiated his background in terms of western lifestyle.

This distinction between cosmopolitan and modern (how Sahil identified himself) versus traditional and antiquated became apparent in Sahil's contemplations of changing

his surname. Sahil did not like his surname, for it linked him to the small Maharashtran village from which his parents originated and (even worse) evoked ancient Sanskrit epics. He saw his surname in conflict with his identity as a cosmopolitan atheist which he developed in Melbourne. Sahil's parents were aware of his thoughts, so when we were visiting the Buddhist pagoda, his mother pointed out the word *Nibbana* inscribed on one the walls knowing her son considered the word a possible version of his surname. *Nibbana* is a *Pali* (Middle Indo-Aryan language, which is a liturgical language of Theravada Buddhism) word for more common Sanskrit version *nirvana* – in brief, a state of being free from suffering. Sahil didn't care much about the meaning; he liked the sound of the word and intended to simplify the spelling to *Nibana*. The discussion concerning the name change initiated by the inscription resulted in his parents disapproval. Ravi raised his voice and announced that if Sahil changes his surname, his identity will be lost. Rupali wasn't upset as much (perhaps because she was a devoted Buddhist and considered meditation important part of her life)[13]. Nevertheless, in the matter of the "name change" Sahil never undertook further steps and has kept his family name.

View from Sahil's window. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

The group that became stereotypically associated the most by my informants in Melbourne with a village background and inclination to tradition, were the "Punjabi taxi-drivers," who in my informant's opinions lived in Australia the same way they would in Indian and didn't intend on changing. On March, 13 2009 Sahil went to undergo a Hazard Perception Test in order to get his Australian driver's license. I met him later in the day outside Safeway groceries chain on Lygon Street. He said that when

[13] Conversion to either Buddhism or Christianity is quite common strategy of some people of "outcast" origin. Both Rupali and Ravi, based on their own experience, abandoned dogmatic Hindu devotion in terms of personal beliefs. Ravi was spiritual, rational, pragmatic, whereas Rupali practiced Buddhist meditation techniques on an approximately daily basis.

he walked inside the building, the room carried a "typical Punjabi smell" because of all the taxi-drivers. Then he made a joke that if nothing else, maybe even he could start driving a taxi (of course, he was not serious). Raj explained his disapproval of being associated with poorer and "more traditional" Indians living in Melbourne, when he stated: '*I hate the fact of someone from Australia looks at me and puts me into the same category as them,'* stated Raj in an interview. When I asked who he referred to, Raj replied: '*I'm talking about ones, who never step out of India and never learn how things work outside India and they have no acceptance of it at all. They just pretty much live in their own nutshell and, you know, they don't wanna integrate with people, who are outside. You know and that's pretty much it. In particular people from the villages who have no idea and, you know, they don't work towards being accepted at all. They just be the way that they are. All they think about is okay, are we earning enough money, we could send money home, they gotta buy house back home and maybe the fact that they've come to Australia is probably to get better dowry.*'

To conclude, within their lives in Melbourne my informants (especially the ones of the Indian original) adapted flexible, cosmopolitan lifestyles as opposed to some "Indian" customs and tradition. This was a strategy through which they differentiated themselves from other Indian groups with which they shared little of social cohesiveness with. This clearly shows that perceiving culture in terms of nation and placing people under national or cultural categories says little about their inner understanding of the self. Discrete, "cultural," nation-based entities emerge more as a stereotype on everyday conversation level, they are results of a political division of the world and say very little about transnational identities of my informants. For me, this simplified categorizing of people based on their national origin was beautifully expressed in a discussion I have witnessed at Dhruv's party in the Lygon Street Apartment in second half of 2008 and I have remembered this scene in a form of joke. So here is the slightly modified version:

An Indian guy tries to make a conversation with two pretty Colombian girls saying: '*In Colombia, you have some great coke there*.'

Iranian guy jumps into the conversation: '*Don't be so stereotypical man, when I tell someone I am from Iran, they ask me if I know how to make a bomb*.'

'*Man, that's nothing,'* announces another Indian guy, who continues: *'When I tell people that I'm from India, they ask me how to get a taxi*.'

7. Ghar Aaja Paradesi Tera Des Bulayee Re – "Come Home Wanderer, Your Country Has Called You": Feeling Desi Through Communities of Attachment and Communities of Sentiment

Ghar Aaja Pardesi – "Come home wanderer-emigrant[14]" from Bollywood film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (aka DDLJ, English title "The Big Hearted Will Take the Bride")

A sobbing cry arises from the cuckoo, triggering memories,
In the orchards the season of swings has returned.
Come home, wanderer, your country has called you.

The illiterate village dust cannot read your letter,
(but) when you come and kiss this dust, the heart of the earth will reel with delight.
Follow those dreams of yours, but (know that) we are also yours.
Oh, forgetful one, we are tormented by your absence!
Come home, wanderer, your country has called you.

Amidst the ringing and jingling of anklets, the women shall come all in a row.
In the fields the mustard plants will ripple.
(By waiting until) tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, years shall pass.
Come back this very day! The crow laughs, he watches for your path.
There! The train whistle is blowing!
Come home, wanderer, your country has called you...

To a certain extant the world has been mobile for centuries, and no societies were perhaps ever fully isolated (see for example Appadurai 1996, Thomas, 1992). Nevertheless, during the twentieth century, the mobility and the interconnectivity of the world significantly increased along with the rapid development of communication and

[14] The Hindi word paradesi can refer to a foreigner, immigrant, outsider, stranger or emigrant but in this case it refers to an immigrant (emigrant). The song Ghar Ajaa Paradesi accompanies a scene in which a family of Indian immigrants in the UK returns to India, to the father's parental house in a Punjabi village (his home of origin) to marry their daughter. The full translation comes from anonymous public source, therefore I have checked the lyrics and specified certain details, such as explanation of the word *paradesi*.

other forms of technologies. As a result, this has strengthened the ties that migrant populations sustain with their countries of origin. As Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc argue: '*The increase in density, multiplicity, and importance of the transnational interconnections of immigrant is certainly made possible and sustained by transformations in the technologies of transportation and communications. Jet planes, telephones, faxes, and internet certainly facilitate maintaining close and immediate ties to home.*' (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999: 81) I attempted to suggest in Chapter 4 (concerning Sahil's journey to Australia) that global transformation in terms of communication opened up an ideological space for Sahil to conduct his journey. More importantly, these technologies are also crucial to regular contact and information exchange with the countries of origin; they enable these interconnections but they don't produce them itself. The majority of my informants sustained regular contacts with their desi communities of attachment simply because they cared. I introduce this vey last chapter of informant's migrant stories with a translation of a part of the song *Ghar Aaja Pardesi* – "Come home wanderer-emigrant" from Bollywood film *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (directed by Aditya Chopra and released in 1995) that I got to know about because of Sahil. The lyrics of the song poetically depict the return of an Indian *emigré* returning to his homeland and reflect the themes I will elaborate on in the following text.

7.1. Visiting Desi Communities of Affection

The majority of my informants preferred to make long distance calls using their mobile phone or with an international calling card. The most regular phone calls were made with the closest family members, particularly mothers, and ranged in intensity from person to person. Some would keep call every second day while others contacted their families (or were contacted, usually by the mother) every other week, but on average, every week a phone call would be made. Communication with friends was often sustained through electronic means: email, Skype calls or social networking sites – particularly Facebook. '*My mom usually calls us (meaning both Savera and Katyayani) and when I wanna stay in touch with my boyfriend I buy a calling card but that's only when I have the money. And with the rest of my friends it's usually Facebook*

because that's the easiest way to stay in touch with people – is social portals', explained Savera.

Moreover, reduced prices for international travel allow regular returns to the countries of origin to an extent that was not possible in the past. This became a crucial aspect in my informants' cases. Not only did it enable them to undertake regular, annular visits to India (lasting even up to couple of months), but the increasingly more affordable air transportation also provided the comfort of relative closeness – for there was always the option of reuniting with those who were left behind, the families and friends who were dearly missed. For example: Savera's sister Katyayani, who resettled temporarily in Melbourne to complete a Master's of Communication Design at the *Swinburne University of Technology*, departed to India for three weeks after her first several months in Australia. She said she experienced the first month in Melbourne as the time of excitement, but after two months she started to feel miserable and overwhelmed by running the household, managing bills, being a student, and being a newly arrived immigrant in a foreign country. Katyayani felt that the journey to India helped her on a psychological level, and after revisiting India she became more comfortable with Melbourne.

Busy streets in Bombay. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

All of my informants had particularly strong connections with family and the close friendships in their countries of origin – family for them was (despite certain conflicts and clashes throughout their lives) a nurturing environment of comfort, – people who cared and who ultimately mattered. In this sense, what made the initial moments a traumatizing experience for several of my informants was not a "painful" process of incorporation into a different country; what they lacked most was the closest supporting network of their own primary *communities of affection*. Savera expressed this "emotional closeness" and respect for her family when she said: '*My family is my back bone. My family is what has made me who I am. Even through the crazy fights, and*

my family is very volatile. (It isn't) the ideal family Indian family, you know, where their daughters respect their parents, know nothing else that. My dad loves to drink whiskey with me and my mom loves getting tattoos, so (laughs). Yeah, it's a pretty wacked out family but because of them I learned how to be independent, I learned how to, ehm, value career over money, I learned how to value work over bank balance and I think that these lessons that my parents thought me, will really help me in the future.' Both Savera and Katyayani, shared a deep respect for their parents, admiring them for giving them a great amount freedom while growing up (for which they were often criticized by the rest of the more traditional relatives). When Savera and Katyayani finished their bachelor degrees, their parents confronted them with a choice. They said they had saved money for their dowries, but under the rapidly changing conditions and increasing emancipation of women in India and the fact that their mother was also working professional, the girls were offered an option to use these finances to study abroad. Both of the sisters decided to study; the first to go to Australia was Katyayani, followed by her older sister about half of a year after.

Due to the strong ties with their family and friends, my informants experienced these annular travels as joyful occasions. The journeys were usually conducted during the Australian university summer break, even after graduation from the universities (the lengths depended on the vacation offered by their employers). Yet, even the transmigrant who sustains regular contacts with the country of origin never finds him or herself in a "same place." My informants (whether Indian nationals or others) found themselves generally in "better" places; in their "homelands," they were perceived with respect. Katy Gardner suggests a different type of migration is where those who immigrate to western countries are glorified (despite their potential poverty, which wouldn't be visible for the *desis* living in India), a reaction which (on a simple level) stems from examples of migrants who have returned home (Gardner, 1993: 10). As Gardner argues: '*The bideshis*[15] *are the new elite, and everybody wants to join them'* (Gardner, 1993: 10).

In a similar way, my informants were also paid respect due to their migrant experience, which made them experience visits to their countries of origin as

[15] Bidesh is a Bengali word corresponding with Hindi videsh, meaning the "foreign land" as opposed to desh meaning homeland with a clear reference to India (Hindustan). In this sense desh is also often a substitute of words India or Hindustan with additional affectionate-patriotic connotations.

increasingly positive. Moreover, for many of my *desi* informants who decided to stay and live permanently in Australia, the visits became associated with time of holiday. Most of the time was spent in their family households, were they were welcomed dearly and handled with care: food, amusement and many other things were taken care of. They were treated like "guests in luxurious hotels," and at the same time they had the comfort of familiarity, and being surrounded by their biological *community of affection*. For some, this new position would spark an interest in travel – certain tourist/outsider experiences which they generally didn't seek when India constituted their "only home." Rahul laughed at the memory of his latest visit of India in the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, commenting that while his brother stared at him in disbelief, he found himself acting like a tourist when he photographed cows in the streets. In this sense, my and Sahil's journey to Goa was not that different.

Regular visits to India did not only provide emotional comfort, they also allowed for a significant exchange of goods: food, clothes, footwear, jewelry, books, keepsakes, kitchen ware, toiletries, *ayurvedic* medicines and other objects (a similar stream follows e.g. Gardner, 1993: 1-15). Unlike in Gardner's example (Gardner 1993), in my informants cases, the flow of goods was mostly one sided as various objects were transported from India to Australia. I suggest that this was due to their rather economically privileged background of middle and upper classes and their student or relatively fresh career development, whereas Gardner focuses on poorer strata of village inhabitants (see Gardner, 1993: 1-15). Yet there is a shared commonality between these two disparate groups, when it comes to privileging the goods produced in India, significantly food. In terms of the exchanges of food, Gardner argues that in the case of Sylheti Bangladeshis, the desire for consumption of "*deshi* food" is embedded within the deep relation of the village communities towards land, strengthened by beliefs in sacred-spiritual powers of the land and tied to an identity with the community of origin, as Gardner points out: '*The food of the desh not only nourishes the members of the group, but its consumption is also a sign of belonging and socialization*' (Gardner, 1993: 5-8).

The majority of my informants grew up in urban spaces. Several of them considered themselves atheists, and the most of the others claimed to be spiritual but did not engage in religious rituals on a regular basis. Thus, for the majority of my

informants the value of these objects was utilitarian or affectionate character. The food supplies brought from India were categorized as "tasting better" but the "greater quality" was associated with habit or local produce in a tropical climate rather than with any spiritual value. The food eaten in India was greatly appreciated and related to the strong emotional ties and family, especially mothers, who spent sometimes hours in the kitchen to nourish and satisfy their expatriate children. Similarly, large amount of objects were transported from India to Australia to reaffirm the identities tying to the countries of origin. When Katyayani unexpectedly left for India after her several initial months in Melbourne, she organized and obtained large amount of objects, which would remind her of her country of origin. Among other things, she brought photograph prints of personal value, bangles and various handcraft decorations and accessories, saying she wanted to have "touches of India" in her room in Melbourne.

Sahil's favourite snack Paani Poori (Panipuri) prepared by his mother Rupali in Bombay. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

In the previous part of this chapter, I suggested that in the majority of my informants' cases, the frequent contacts, regular visits and flows of goods were sustained primarily because the close ties with the families were experienced as nurturing and affectionate. Nevertheless, these intense interconnections also served as a constant reminder of their countries of origin that were perceived with a certain ambiguity by many of my informants. As I tried to show in the previous chapter, many of my informants of Indian origin associated *desh* with tradition, conservativeness, corruption and poverty, which they perceived as negative aspects in terms of their Melbournian identities. Yet, at the same time, India constituted a familiar, nurturing environment deeply connected their emotional self-definitions; it was a place where their actual *desi communities of affection* dwelled. Yet my *desi* informants shared

another link to India that largely determined their public identities: they were Indian Citizens (except Ram). They were people who grew up in the ideological space of a particular nation-state and as a result shared the experiences of patriotic pride in their "motherland" India. In Appadurai's words they created a *community of sentiment* (Appadurai, 1990). In this respect, the following section constitutes a case study of the reproduction and embodiment of nationalist discourse using the example of "Sahil's goose pumps." In this manner, I intend on completing the "bricollage," "mosaic" or "quilt" of transmigrants' understanding of selves with experiences of *desi* patriotism.

7.2. Goose Bumps and Other Examples of Embodiment of Transmigrant Desi Patriotism

In early 2009, the beginning of fall in Melbourne, I was strolling down the city streets with Sahil when the Antarctic wind coming from the southern oceans made me shiver. At that instant, my body formed thousands of tiny goosebumps, little pyramids rising up from my skin. I more closely resembled a plucked chicken than a human being. As I commented on my bodily reaction, Sahil's eyes glowed with surprise and curiosity at the same time. From the expression on his face I understood that for him, this was unknown territory – *terra incognita* of the bodily landscape. '*So, when do you get goosebumps then*?' – I asked, astonishment and fascination resonating in my voice. The silence that followed intensified my anticipation; time slowed like some type of docile reptile numbed by the early autumn chill. Sahil couldn't stop blushing, and hesitated with his answer for several minutes. When *desis* blush, they don't turn red as the etymology of the word would indicate, but they keep smiling in a slightly different way they normally do, and their gestures and moves are gentle and timid. This reminded me of Clifford Geertz and his notion of the *thick description* (Geertz, 2000: 3-30), since it wasn't just a smile, Sahil was blushing because he felt shy. He wasn't sure whether his feelings weren't a little bit "stupid," as he later admitted. Finally, he whispered: '*When I feel patriotic.'*

Enchanted by this situation, I chose to use the case of Sahil's goosebumps to analyse how nationalist sentiment is experienced as bodily expressions and as a result becomes part of bodily understanding of the self. The patriotic sentiment linked with the country of origin precedes the cosmopolitan, transmigrant identities my informants have

developed and coexists with these other interpretations of the self. In this subchapter I intend to emphasize that the precedence of experience of the incorporated nationalist sentiment isn't anything one is "born with," it is instead a product of the mechanisms of appropriation and embodiment that serves to support the idea of distinct nation-states. As I emphasized in the previous part of the chapter, the importance of sustaining contacts and revisiting the "homelands" is primarily verbalized and experienced as visits of the *communities of affection*. Yet, my *desi* informants shared another sentimental link to India in terms of patriotism, which many of them (but not all) have experienced as rarely verbalized, abstract, yet bodily experienced "love of their homeland" – in Appadurai's words they created *community of sentiment* within the context of Indian nationalism (Appadurai, 1990)[16]. Thus, in the following part, I will elaborate on the mechanisms of embodiment of the nationalistic discourse that allows disparate multiplicity of Indian citizens (and other people of Indian origin) to perceive themselves as part of a singular body of India, *Hindustan*, *Bharat* or *Desh*.

The very moment I spoke about this, I realised that even such a seemingly biological feature must be somehow penetrated by the matrix of the social space, which helped me understand the "patriotic passions" my informants occasionally expressed and mostly experienced despite their associations with India being confined to tradition, poverty and corruption. Yet, there was a distinction between the ones that decided to migrate on a more permanent basis and Savera and Katyayani, who employed more activistic approaches to contemporary situation in India and planned to return back in order to work for change. Also, I am not trying to argue that goosebumps are always necessarily a product of the social or nationalistic sentiment, nor I am I saying that saying that all of my *desi* informants experienced nationalistic sentiment in this manner. Yet, the interconnection of bodily reaction that I manifest through goosebumps linked to nationalism, seemed as common expression of sentiments that were otherwise hardly expressed. Moreover, I argue that because the nationalist feeling is experienced in form of emotion and arises as highly unreflected, it can endure embedded in one's mind despite contradicting other identities that one might develop.

[16] According to Appadurai, community of sentiment is not exclusively the matter of nationalism, it can be applied to other communion's within the society, however it seem to be felicitous term to describe formation constituted of nationalist sentiment.

7.3. Nationalism as a sentiment

From the previous text it should become apparent that within transmigrant's identity, patriotism is experienced prevailingly as a bodily reaction to various stimuli imbued with nationalistic discourse that persist in mind and significantly interpenetrates transmigrant identity. In this sense, Appadurai's understanding of the contemporary world order as "postnational," seems far too optimistic, in the situation where nation-states still powerfully dictate the conditions of immigration and where transmigrants' comprehensions of the self still fluctuate in between transnational and national identities, readily associate with the latter rather than first (e.g. Appadurai, 2003: 337-350). For that reason, Gupta's comprehension that: '*The nation is so deeply implicated in the texture of everyday life and so thoroughly presupposed in academic discourses on "culture" and "society" that it becomes difficult to remember that it is only one, relatively recent, historically contingent form of organizing space in the world*' (Gupta, 2003: 321), seems more viable. In the following pages I will attempt to explain why.

The nation is from historical point of view a very new (one could say modern) form of organization of space in the world. Moreover, it is an entity that is primarily imagined and in a sense "invented." This becomes were apparent in much of the writing in social sciences, but most importantly in analysis of Ernest Gellner (Gellner, 1964) and Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 1983). One of the most famous of Gellner's arguments is that: '*Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents the nations where they do not exist*' (Gellner, 1964: 169). Thus, in this sense, it is nationalism (nationalist sentiment), that is crucial for the establishment of the body of nation. Anderson presents similar yet different concept, when he characterizes a nation as: '*an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the member of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion*' (Anderson, 1983: 15-16). Following Anderson's (Anderson, 1983) and Gellner's (Gellner, 1964) findings, I suggest that nation-state is inherently imagined and anchored in people's minds – what causes one to believe one is a part of a singular body of the nation is a conviction driven and put into

motion by a nationalist sentiment, which necessarily raises the question of the reproduction and embodiment of the nationalist ideology.

According to Anderson, the book played a key role in the process of raising the national consciousness (Anderson, 1983: 32, 33). Fiction, according to Anderson, creates images of belonging to a certain territory, with both the heroes and heroines of the book and the readers united in a sense of belonging to one group (Anderson, 1983: 30). Furthermore, Anderson argues that newspapers are a form of book (Anderson, 1983: 33) and I would add that the same can be said about media of other various types. In a similar sense, Appadurai introduces the concept of mediascapes: landscapes of images distributed and spread by electronic media such as newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios (Appadurai, 1996: 35). Appadurai puts it: (mediascapes) '*provide... ...large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed*' (Appadurai, 1996: 35). Furthermore, the influence of mediascapes is so significant that the lines between real and fictional landscapes intertwine, so that the audiences might create imagined worlds (Appadurai, 1996: 33) – for example, the fictions of a nation. This is particularly significant in case of India, where the Bollywood industry serves as a powerful mediator and constant reminder of the nationalistic discourses of sentiment and belonging.

'When I was a kid I used to listen to some good song, like patriotic song or watch a patriotic movie and yeah, and if someone is dying or something for independence, I'd would get goosebumps…There was this one song by A.R. Rahman – Vande Mataram, that was a pop song actually, not pop but it was considered to be pop but I think he released it for the independence – independence day, yeah…I don't know what it means but the song was patriotic because he did lyrics also, it says something like I went to so many countries but the most beautiful was India and all that and I don't know the full lyrics but, there is more like that', explained Sahil, when he was attempting to recall the occasions of feeling patriotic[17]. Sahil also spoke about his mother reacting in a similar way as well as his friend Rahul, who admitted that when he listened to patriotic songs

[17] Sahil would get goosebumps when he watched sport matches, significantly cricket and later also tennis, which was connected either with patriotism or sportsmen achieving something exceptional. This is indeed a truly interesting aspect that should be taken in respect for further inquiry.

like *Vande Mataram – Maa Tujhe Salaam* (I salute you mother) by A.R. Rahman, his skin responded with goosebumps.

Since I wouldn't stop asking, Sahil specified the events during which he felt patriotic saying: '*Okay, you feel patriotic when, you know, during the independence day, that week, because all the channels are showing all these freedom fighters so and so, so and so and they are playing all those movies. So you just get patriotic and everyone has those flags everywhere, Indian flags and you stop at the traffic light and someone is selling the Indian flags, so you just get patriotic.*' As well as for Sahil linking patriotism (nationalist sentiment) to various forms of media, nationalistic symbols (most importantly the Indian national flag) and official state holidays seemed symptomatic for all of my *desi* informants. In their Melbournian homes the significance of songs and films arose as especially important for they constituted a mobile, media reminder of their nationalist sentiment which could be replayed any time, keeping their embodied memory alive.

Therefore, understanding nationalism and its experiences with a feeling or sentiment seems to a productive theoretical framework for understanding its persistence in terms of transnational identities, for this allows one to theorize nationalism with the mechanisms of embodiment. Gellner also links nationalism to sentiment when he states: '*Nationalism is a sentiment, or as a movement, can be best defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind*' (Gellner, 1983: 1). Extending upon this understanding, in this thesis I am interested in Gellner's latter aspect of experiencing nationalism rather than the former – the "feeling of satisfaction aroused by the fulfillment of the nationalist sentiment" (Gellner, 1983: 1). In my particular case, I suggest that the feeling of satisfaction initiates the appearance of goosebumps on Sahil's body and makes others tear. Thus, this necessitates a more detailed reconnaissance of the relationship between sentiments, emotions and social space.

7.4. Sentiments, Emotions and the Social Space – Living and Experiencing Communities of Sentiment

If nation happened be 'just' an *imagined community* reproduced by media (Anderson, 1983: 30-33), no more profound, bodily experiences of commonality amongst its members would be possible. In this respect, Arjun Appadurai introduces the concept of *communities of sentiment* – groups imagining and feeling together, which are closely tied to the spread of mass media but function on a basis of embodiment (see Appadurai, 1990 and 1996: 8). For Appadurai, emotions are a discursive public form connected to embodied experience (Appadurai, 1990: 92). Emotions aren't a product of direct communication between the "inner" self, but they involve further public negotiations of certain gestures and responses (Appadurai, 1990: 93, 94). When such negotiations succeed in the social space, they create, according to Appadurai, a *community of sentiment* (Appadurai, 1990: 94). Importantly, along with the transnational impact of media's capability of dissemination of information, *communities of sentiment* are sustained across the borders of nation-state and function as immediate bodily experiences of feelings of belonging.

Emotions are also a discursive practice for Lila Abu Lughod (Abu Lughod, 1990: 27). In this respect, Abu Lughod argues that what individuals think and feel is a product of socially organized modes of action and talk (Abu Lughod, 1990: 27). My perspective is slightly different from Abu Lughod's one. Sahil's experience of goosebumps existed prevailingly outside the language; he knew he felt patriotic but had difficulties to further verbalize or rationalize this process. I argue that emotions and sentiments are not primarily experienced through the means of language, but through a large set of bodily expressions and reactions that are often non-verbalized. Hence, in the 'silence' of the language one can discover an internal mirror of the social landscape of enormous significance and it is this large amount of the most intimate experiences that remain inarticulate or simply unspoken of that the field of social anthropology needs to include in further inquiry.

The shyness with which Sahil reacted to my question and the "silence of the speech" or confusion most of my informants expressed when the question was brought up leads me to my final theoretical argument: nationalistic discourse is embodied and internalized through the process raised and explained by Appadurai (Appadurai, 1990)

that I have proposed above along with Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990). The propositions made by Pierre Bourdieu are crucial for a deeper understanding of the processes in which the social space and the 'dark,' impalpable dimension of the 'inner' self intermingle (Bourdieu, 1990). Therefore, in this section I argue that the idea of nationalism reproduces through Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and it is in this manner it also becomes anchored one's mind and eventually experienced as a bodily reaction. In short, *habitus* is a system of dispositions of an individual and such a system of dispositions is one's response to the objective, social structure and the subjective, experience of the self (Bourdieu, 1990: 52-65). Our presence in the world is an active presence, and through this active interaction the world imposes its presence in a form of the objective structure (Bourdieu, 1990: 52). And it is precisely on the basis of this mechanism that *habitus* can absorb the nationalistic ideology of the state and negotiate his or her attachment to it. According to Bourdieu: '*Habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as forgotten history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product*' (Bourdieu, 1990: 56). Such autonomy of the past, in Bourdieu's perspective, functions as an accumulated capital, produces history on basis of history and therefore leads to a permanence in change; it transforms the individual agent into a "world within the world" (Bourdieu, 1990: 56).

Furthermore, Bourdieu characterizes *habitus* as spontaneity without consciousness or will (Bourdieu, 1990: 56), but it is *doxa* that is grounded even deeper: the attuned, pre-verbal and taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense (Bourdieu, 1990: 68). I argue that the concept of *doxa* explains the uncertainty Sahil had exposed when I tried to discuss his feelings with him. He repetitively stated: '*What is there to say"*? And it is this silence of the language, the impossibility to verbalize the bodily reactions that makes them appear as 'natural,' and more importantly allows the coexistence with other (even contradictory) ideologies. However, according to Bourdieu, what is seemingly "natural" is carefully constructed by every social order and tends to categorize the body and the words within the language into a sort of taxonomies filled with a particular meaning. It is through these mechanisms that the machinery of the symbolic power is put into motion (Bourdieu, 1990: 69). As Bourdieu states: '*Bodily hexis is political mythology realized, em-bodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and*

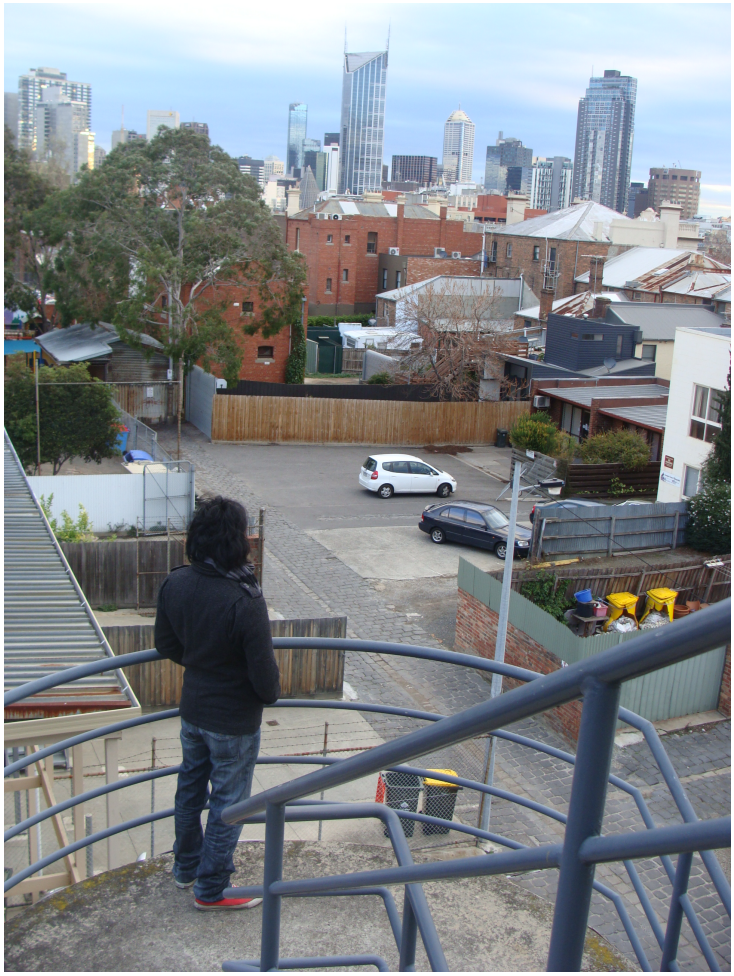
thinking' (Bourdieu, 1990: 69, 70). Such explanation is particularly helpful for understanding how the nationalist ideology can penetrate human bodies, create a sentiment and result in the bodily reaction such as goosebumps. Moreover, this brings us back to Gellner's idea that the nationalist sentiment is the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment (Gellner, 1983: 1), but for the nationalist sentiment to be from time to time experientially fulfilled it needs to pre-exist embedded in one's mind and become associated with certain bodily reactions. However, I suggest that there is no permanent fulfillment but only a temporary, experiential one – as Sahil noted: '*Once the song is over, finally it's okay, then I'm in my…own world (again)*.'

7.5. Travelling nationalisms

In this very last chapter I (symbolically) wind up the stories of my informants as constantly moving, on their journeys in between various physical locations but more importantly between different ideologies shaping their selves. Based on the previous text, I suggest that the nationalist sentiment in terms of unreflected experience continues shaping the contemporary transmigrant identities. The nationalism experienced as a form of "bodily patriotism" remains "hidden" under the surface of transmigrants' selves occasionally debouching, as in Sahil's case. The nationalistic sentiment endures in a form of the unreflected embodiment of the nationalistic discourse as I showed using the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990) and Appadurai (Appadurai, 1990). At the same time, because the nationalist sentiment is embodied and unreflected it can efficiently interpenetrate the transnational, cosmopolitan discourse (delineated by the distinction between cosmopolitan *desi* immigrant as opposed to uneducated, traditional one). Thus, the cosmopolitan, transnational selves of my informants arise as a multiplicity of identities under potential, positional negotiations in between the cosmopolitan and nationalist discourses. Moreover, because of the embodiment of nationalist discourse experienced and lived in terms of *communities of sentiment* (Appadurai, 1990), the imagery of national unity arises and connects not only the *desi* transmigrant friends in Melbourne but ideologically delineates the community in terms of the nation-state. Such perception of this nationally organized world order is further endorsed by immigration policies of different nation-states and everyday language modes that divide populations on the basis of national categories. Yet, this distinction is

a matter of collectively shared imaginations because, as I attempted to show in case of my informants, the links between *desh* and *videsh* are primarily sustained in terms of actual *communities of affection* (family circles and the closest friends who "care") and supported by the experiences of imagined *communities of sentiment* (Appadurai, 1990).

Arjun Appadurai, *desi* transmigrant from Bombay himself, has argued that: '*Loyalty often leads individuals to identify with transnational cartographies, while the appeal of citizenship attaches them to territorial states. These disjunctures indicate that territory, once a commonsense justification for the legitimacy of the nation-state, has become the key site of the crises of sovereignty in a transnational world* (Appadurai, 2003: 347). Sahil and the majority of his friends also identified with their transnational identities that linked them to multiple localities. Yet, I suggest that this has neither contributed to nor was perceived as the "crisis of sovereignty" of the nation-states. Their public identities continued to be defined through viewpoint of the nation-state logic. What emerged to be in "crisis" were their identities – the transitory selves of multiplicity coexisting in contradiction – because the "logic" of nationalistic discourse continues to adhere to singular loyalties that can no longer be claimed.



Sahil in Melbourne. Photo: Markéta Slavková.

'*Like for example I'm an Indian in Australia*,' Sahil begin to contemplate. '*I don't know, at this point I think, they (Indians who remained in India) feel more (patriotic)*

than me. I don't know what I'm talking about,' said Sahil uncertainly. '*Maybe I feel proud of being Indian, maybe. You know, because they are talking good things about India (in terms nationalistic discourse). And you go, ah okay…Like the culture and stuff like this, which I don't necessarily think that it's so great*,' he explained. '*I feel like myself, like I don't belong anywhere*,' he concluded. However, as he listened to *Vande Mataram – Maa Tujhe Salaam* and watched the captivating video symbolically interconnect *desis* of different regions hoisting and waving Indian national flags, Sahil felt his doubts about the motherland dissolve as a fiery feeling of excitement flared up inside his chest, and he felt like he still belonged somewhere, that he somehow remained part of the singular body of the Indian nation, and the little mountains of goosebumps rose from his skin: the Nilgiris, the Cardamom Hills, the Eastern and Western Ghats, and the Himalayas of his bodily landscape.[18] But when the song finished, the fog of the patriotic fever dispersed and he was back in his own world again – now he was a Melbournian of *desi* heritage.

[18] The information listed in the last paragraph is based on Sahil's actual statements, apart from the very last comparison, which is meant as a more or less poetic metaphor of the relationship between the individual body and the nation. This is done in a dual sense: first, the nation is often personified and the morphology of the physical nation-state is associated with particular body parts, and second, through the embodiment of the nationalist discourse one becomes in a way a miniature nation-state within himself (as Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1990) 'world within a world,' regarding broader considerations).

8. Conclusion: Transmigrant's Transcending Transitions – Contemplations on a Story without an End

In this thesis, titled *The Benefits of Loss: Life Strategies and Negotiations of Identity amongst Indian Transmigrants in Melbourne, Australia*, I have attempted to examine the migrant experiences of a social network of young transmigrants prevailingly of Indian origin. As the titled signifies, I suggest that on one hand, an individual migration journey can bring various benefits and is perceived in terms of benefit, while on the other hand, migration leads to inevitable loss. The migration experience of my informants improved the conditions of their personal lives on many levels, led to the establishment of new transmigrant, cosmopolitan lifestyles and their Melbournian *communities of affection* and offered greater personal freedoms and independence. Moreover, due to their migrant experience, their life chances rose in their home countries, and as a result, they became respected *desis* living in Australia that many could only dream to follow. They themselves became young successful Melbournian professionals, even though some of them struggled to find employment at the time of my research. However, this relatively privileged position of economically secure, educated overseas migrants didn't mean that their translocations were easy and many of them suffered the emotional loss of those closest to them, their *desi communities of affection* – the people who stayed behind and were dearly missed. Thus, even in the case of relatively privileged transmigrants, migration entails both benefits and losses.

Moreover, in this study I have attempted to show through the example of particular migrants how a new type of immigrant arises – the one of transmigrant (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999: 72-105). Similar to other transmigrants, my informants' daily lives consisted of multiple and constant interconnections across two or more nation-states as well as their public and private identities that were defined by such transitions. Not even their closest friends' circles in Melbourne were confined to the framework of the nation-states; their social surroundings included a diverse international crowd. Both personal and public identities of my informants in Melbourne arose in multiplicity, and my informants developed cosmopolitan, city lifestyles with multiple attachments across the nation-state borders at

the same time as they established and perceived themselves as Melbournians. I suggest that the tendency to adopt fairly cosmopolitan life-strategies embracing multiplicity was supported by the type of migration stream through which my informants came to Australia and the fact that their initial integration into the Melbournian life-style took place in the university environment. They were highly educated individuals who generally came alone, established their new lives alone and developed new friendships on their own as well. Since their initial contacts and integration into Melbournian lifestyle took place at a multicultural, open, university environment that celebrated diversity, they adopted similar approaches following the example of other students or staff. These notions of multiplicity in terms of their identities were reflected both immaterially – e.g., in notions of home and belonging – as well as materially – in the furnishings of their houses or the way they dressed.

The majority of these young transmigrants came to Melbourne, Australia on overseas student visas in order to obtain their master's degrees with local universities. The crucial criteria for their choice was the worldwide rating of the university, and this was the reason the majority of them decided to study with the *University of Melbourne*. Australia was also the more affordable option compared with the UK or the US, and my informants were well aware that if they chose the right educational program, it will be easy to stay in Australia on a more permanent basis as well. Even though not all of them initially intended on remaining in Australia on permanent basis, many of them did, and when they left their homelands for Melbourne they knew it could be "for good." However, as transmigrants, they always kept their options open; their decisions were not definite, and continued to be modified throughout their lives abroad. Nevertheless, obtaining Australian PR was the goal for most of my informants already before their departure. As Lili noted: *'So my brother and I we both did accounting, so it was one of those, you know, case when if you do accounting you get PR sure shot, you'll definitely get it. Because it's one of those jobs they are demanding…So if we got here, we already studied, there is no harm in getting the PR but I don't think I really thought I'd grow to love Australia that much.'* From what Lili said, getting the PR was an important criterion despite the lack of an initial intention to stay for more than several years. However, after establishing her life in Melbourne, she grew to enjoy her life there and in a result wanted to stay.

An important aspect during my informants' establishment in Australia consisted of the rise of their own close Melbourne communities of friends, which I propose to call *communities of affection*. I understand *communities of affection* as extended form of Appadurai's notion of *neighborhoods* (Appadurai, 1996: 178-185). *Communities of affection* are social formations in terms of actual communities based on mutually shared emotional ties in terms of a kin and friendships; however, they often transcend the notions of a kin. They emerge as sites of social cohesiveness motivated by individual desires of belonging and participation. In my informants' cases I have allocated three types of significant *communities of affection*: *communities of affection* around the kin and friends in the country of origin, Melbournian *desi communities of affection* with some of the individuals constituting a second family abroad, and Melbournian friends of other backgrounds. The sense of belonging was more important within these transmigrant circles *communities of affection* than notions of a physical place, which also reflects clearly in my informants' imagination of home and understanding of the self and the contacts they maintained with countries of origin. In this respect, I suggest that, in the case of my informants, the notion of belonging unwinds from the *communities of affection*, whether they are the ones left behind in the previous countries of dwelling or the ones established in Melbourne.

In terms of their Melbournian lives, my *desi* informants formed friendships across regional boundaries. They cared little about from which part of the country they came from – being an educated, *desi*, transmigrant who they sympathized with was what mattered. They enjoyed the company of other *desi* in terms of commonly shared familiarities with certain manners, customs and habits. In this respect, the closest friends – who they began to perceive as their second family abroad – generally developed around other *desi* friends. This does not necessarily imply that the international friendships mattered less; they mattered differently. International friendships were materialized "testimonies" of their cosmopolitan lives of their flexibility and adaptability, whereas the *desi* friendships offered the familiarity of their past homes in their countries of origin as well as being friendships they could always rely on regardless of the situation. Thus, in this sense, friendships with other *desis* were important, and perhaps they were also important in terms of nationalist sentiment, although my informants did not necessarily feel social cohesiveness with other Indian

origin groups in Melbourne, especially the less educated ones from villages that seemed to incline towards tradition. My informants considered themselves liberal, cosmopolitan, modern Melbournians of Indian origin and expressed disapproval and disappointment when placed in the same category as the less educated Indian origin groups. In this sense, the distinctions in terms of social cohesiveness I have encountered in Melbourne were in terms of lifestyle and education, rather than around national boundaries (at least in the case of highly educated, skilled migrants). In other words, my *desi* informants felt closer to other nationals with similar lifestyles than with less educated persons of Indian origin who publicly exposed an inclination to tradition. However, it was precisely this problematic understanding of "Indianness" in terms of tradition that from time to time clashed with their experiences of patriotism.

Also, the sense of belonging with the country of origin was in the case of my informants primarily maintained and understood in terms of *communities of affection* that were left behind. The regular phone calls, emails and Facebook conversations always concerned the relatives and close friends from the countries origin, most frequently mothers who cared for keeping a regular contact with their children abroad. In terms of maintaining these close links, as Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc point out, this increased density of interconnections was made possible and is sustained by the transformation of the technologies of communication and travel (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, 1999: 81). However, it is always initiated and maintained by individuals who have the desire of "staying in touch." As a result, my informants were able to develop vibrant cosmopolitan lifestyles of transmigrants and in a sense "function in multiple places simultaneously." My informants also shared another important link to their countries of origin that resulted in the renegotiation and questioning of their transmigrant identities – the one of appropriated and embodied nationalist discourse experienced in terms of patriotism. I examine the imagery of social cohesiveness in terms of nationalistic discourse using Appadurai's concept of *community of sentiment* (Appadurai, 1990 and 1996: 8). Using the example of goosebumps I show (through various theoretical concepts concerning nationalism and emotions) how the notion of national unity is embodied throughout one's life, resulting in experiences of patriotism (in terms of love for a homeland) as well as unreflected sentiments of belonging in terms of a nation. More importantly, this patriotic form of

nationalist sentiment becomes part of my informants' understanding of the self, which is "incarcerated" so deeply that it does not weaken within their transmigrant identities in Melbourne. The persistence of nationalistic discourse of patriotism which celebrates tradition tended to occasionally clash with my informants' Melbournian identities as opposed to tradition. This made them sometimes question and renegotiate their positions with identity and definitions of the self.

Thus, I suggest that transmigrants' identity and understanding of the self (based on the example I offered in this thesis) continues to be shaped by various aspects: senses of belonging with *communities of affections*, the transnational experience (mediated through cosmopolitan and multicultural discourses, at least in the university environment in Melbourne) and nationalist discourse (in terms of both patriotism and "national geographic" world order (see Malkki, 1992) including the immigration policies of singular nation-states. In this respect, Appadurai's notion of "postnational" world order (e.g. Appadurai, 2003: 337-350) seems far too optimistic since transmigrant's comprehension of the self still heavily rests on the association with the nation-state, since the nationalist discourse is being imposed on inhabitants of the nation-state from very early on as I showed in the last chapter of this thesis. However, the transmigrant's understandings of the self emerge in multiplicity as Malkki has suggested: "mobile" and "processual," "partly self/construction," "partly categorization by others" – they are "creolized aggregate composed through bricolage" (Malkki, 1992: 37). Therefore, as I have attempted to show in this thesis, an understanding of the self with "discrete cultures" and "national geographic" world order that delineate ones identities and sense of belonging are no longer viable (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 1991; Clifford, 1992, Gupta; Fergusson, 1992, Gupta; Fergusson, 1997b, Malkki, 1992). This type of understanding of identity is imagined and imposed on the individual throughout life and is transcended on everyday level interactions of my informants and within their understanding of the selves. Thus, I suggest, following Appadurai's proposal, that: *'We need to think ourselves beyond nation…the nation is largely a thought or an imagined thing'* (Appadurai, 1993: 411) Moreover, we need to think ourselves beyond "discrete cultures" linked to the notion of the nation in terms of "national geographic." Only then will the transmigrant be freed from the struggle between the clash of various discourses, especially the one of "national geographic" that incarcerates and roots him or her in a

singular place and turns the immigrant into the "Other." If we step out from this black and white mind scope, we might find that humans are highly adaptable individuals regardless of the "culture," that nationalist sentiment is a "momentary fever" that does not occur if we don't encourage it, that as Lili has suggested "homes can travel," and that we are not after all that different from each other, no matter where we come from. Nevertheless, until such comprehension becomes embedded in people's minds, transmigrants will have to keep renegotiating their positions in translocal terrains on an everyday level caught between the various, often clashing discourses. These renegotiations are a continuous process, and it is also in this sense that the story of this thesis ends "unfinished" – for there always decisions to be taken and remaining stories to be told. And so, in this sense there are really no ends to be taken for granted and it is in this respect that I close off the stories of my informants, "returning" instead to a moment in a story where I began these contemplations.[19]

March 6, 2009, was a pleasant evening. Rahul, Sahil and I were chatting at Vivek's and Dhruv apartment at Lygon Street while waiting for the rest to turn up. Vivek was still at the gym and Dhruv got caught at work. It was later in the evening while discussing the recent events when Rahul announced he was getting married. He smiled and calmly stated, "It is a typical arranged marriage," and exhibited the "holy thread" wrapped around his right wrist. The news of the marriage suddenly stirred the atmosphere of "lightness of the being" wrapped up in jokes, making it nearly unbearable; this was a serious matter – Rahul was an adult now, he was engaged and he was returning to India, this became clear. Sahil was curious and teased Rahul to show him her photo, but deep inside, he felt shaken and asked Rahul compassionately how he managed. Rahul managed well, and although he initially felt very ambiguous about his marriage, he knew the final decision was his. I was also puzzled and tried to make sense of this seemingly "bizarre" combination; cosmopolitan Rahul voluntarily accepting a centuries old set of customs. Later that evening we dined on vegetarian pizza, some of us smoked cigarettes instead of dessert (or a protein shake as Vivek joked) and, of course, Tekken was played.

The following day, Sahil and I planned to cook dinner at Vivek and Dhruv's apartment. I was making bengain bhurta, a delicious spicy dish prepared from burned

[19] The following text is based on nonfictional literary representation of Rahul's journey to India in 2008–2009.

eggplant according to a recipe Sahil's mother gave me in Bombay while Sahil made one his favorite things to eat – chicken curry. While cooking, Sahil spoke with Dhruv. He confessed that he found Rahul's arranged marriage shocking, and expressed disapproval of the tradition. Dhruv took offense and told Sahil not to criticize tradition; he supported Rahul's decision and emphasized that it was normal. Then he approached Sahil with a question: 'For how long did your parents know each other before they got married?' Sahil, didn't find an answer; his parents' marriage was also arranged, but he couldn't imagine himself in the same position as Rahul, and Dhruv's reaction left him surprised. In fact, Dhruv couldn't really imagine himself having an arranged marriage, for at the time he was more than happy with his Australian (gori) girlfriend Katie. Yet, although Dhruv was "putting on thick layers of Australian make-up these days," he defended this particular tradition of his "homelands." Rahul's arranged marriage was a disquieting matter, for it questioned the transmigrant identities they had established in Melbourne. They felt like they had to take positions but they didn't really know which ones – both of these stances were theirs.

When Rahul mentioned his wedding, he announced that the very first question Nandita ever asked him was whether he smokes and drinks. Smoking and drinking has bad connotations within Indian society; most of the parents perceived it as a despicable act of the weak. Rahul smiled and took his time to explain that in Australia, things are different... They sat in a room at his uncle's place in Chennai accompanied by the closest family members. Nandita was dressed in the traditional conservative manner with the pallu (the loose end of the sari) modestly covering her head. Her delicate face faded in comparison with the maroon sari she chose for the occasion, and her petite figure tilted with the weight of the bangles, bracelets, necklaces and earrings. For a long time she remained silent and virtuously bowed her head to avoid looking Rahul in the eye. Rahul did not find this aspect about her very appealing. He preferred women who can speak face to face, look daringly into a man's eyes. It took him some time to understand that Nandita behaved in this way for the sake of her family.

What Rahul had later discovered was that Nandita was expected to portray Sita – wife of Rama, the seventh avatar of the god Vishnu. In Hindu tradition Sita represents the virtuous woman and devoted wife of the everyday life. Her love, loyalty and faithfulness overstep the limits; her purity resists the pernicious flames of fire – the

steps of her feet transform live coals into lotus blossoms. Sitting in the hotel room, Nandita resembled Sita down to the last detail. She was a reserved, quiet girl who knew that women are not supposed to speak loudly, and should remain soft and smooth in their manners. Having to highlight her family's fair reputation, Nandita was presented in the context of tradition – she displayed her socio-ideological background: the religion, class, caste. What Rahul was supposed to see wasn't Nandita's psychological self, it was the cultural make-up that eventually becomes deeply embodied in our flesh and bones and comes to constitute an equally important part of our identities.

'My dad's sister's husband's younger brother's wife – her sister is my mother-in-law', explained Rahul. Technically speaking, there are three ways of arranging the marriage in Hindu tradition: with help of the matchmaker agencies, through matrimonial websites or through spreading the word within the family or circle of the closest friends. The last was the case of Rahul. It had spared him the trouble of inspecting countless catalogues with girls smiling from the photos and endless hours of discussing the matters with his mother with whom he doesn't dare to argue when it comes to serious issues. One day, the matrimonial intrigues of his relatives finally reached his future mother-in-law who found Rahul attractive enough to move one step forward: she asked Rahul's parents for his horoscope.

Arranging a marriage in India is as sophisticated as a game of chess. Similar to chess, arranged marriages involve several pieces strategically moved around the chessboard of the social landscape. Unlike chess, the goal of the game isn't based on defeating the opponent; the checkmate represents the best possible match for the future husband and wife's mutual happiness. The strategic management of marriage considers various factors around the bride's or groom's family background: reputation, religion, class, caste, wealth and many others. This is highly significant since it is believed that likeness gives birth to harmony and long lasting happiness. In this sense, marriage is a type of "bridal economy." The bride establishes the alliance between two different families and obligates them to exchange favours. As a result, marriage becomes increasingly important with the family. Individuals are always deeply embedded within the comfort zone of the circle of their relatives. They aren't alone, abandoned or forgotten; in most of the cases they are loved and handled with care.

Yet the psychological self isn't entirely absent; within the Hindu tradition it appears in a form of horoscope (kundli). In Vedic astrology, personal natal charts predict both the destiny (kismat) and individual personality based on the positions of the planets during the moment of birth. When it comes to the love match, the prediction relies on lunar constellations (nakshatras). In Hindu tradition, people believe that the matching qualities of the natal charts (guna milap) determine the happiness of the couple. Hence, for Rahul and Nandita it was literally all in the stars. Yet there was one more catch; both Rahul and Nandita were mangliks. Mangal dosha is a term describing the presence of Mars in specific houses of the natal chart; if this astrological condition appears the person is known as manglik. In Vedic tradition mangliks are believed to have destructive impact on marriages; according to folklore, marrying a manglik might result in divorce or worse – partner's death. Mars (Mangal) is the fiery planet and if you play around with fire, you might burn. But since Rahul and Nandita were both mangliks, the malign dispositions cancelled each other; as in the case of propositional logic, two negatives lead to a positive outcome.

Rahul was both Indian and Australian. He didn't believe in love at first sight, nor did he believe in the Vedic astrology. Even though he didn't favour traditionally arranged marriages, Rahul wanted to give this one an "extra shot" for the sake of his parents, the respect he felt for them and for the honour and reputation of his family name. Last but not least he owed it to himself. After leaving his uncle's house in Chennai, both of the families headed for dinner. It was socially unacceptable for Rahul's and Nandita's families to let their children go on their own – what would the aunts and uncles think?! The busy streets of Chennai, earthy taste of dust, suffocating car fumes, voices in the overcrowded streets fused into irritable noise. It was around 7 p.m. when they reached the restaurant – an early dinner for Indian standards. Rahul walked around the tables to alleviate the anxiety he felt. The flow of thoughts running through his head was disturbed by his cousin who walked straight up to him. The cousin took him on the side with a grin exposing a hint of secrecy and conspiracy in the wrinkles around his lips. He suggested Rahul and Nandita rush to the car park and he would take care of the appetizers, which would be, as it happens, delayed. Rahul did not hesitate; he knew it was a unique chance to find a place for Nandita in his heart, so he played along. Funnily, Rahul happened to kidnap the bride a couple of months before

the wedding and he did not have regrets. He took her for a drive, showed her the city and the beach – the ultimate destination for the romantic endeavours in India. The anonymous crowds and perhaps the openness of the space made her feel more relaxed, and forgetting the time, they got engaged in a conversation. It was an evening full of sentiment, and the nightfall gave the moment a sensation of intimacy.

Rahul understood life as a compromise. The idea to get married in his mid-twenties was, in a way, a product of haggling or, more precisely, considering his parents desire. If it was for his parents, he would have already been married for two years, while if he could independently decide, he would have waited another two years. It was a contradiction between the Indian tradition when the parents decide and the Western idea of the importance of the individual, but at that time, Rahul was in India and he deeply felt for his parents. He decided to compromise, his answer to the marriage was: "Yes." However, it was his own way, his own position, his own compromise, his ultimate decision to honour his parents, make them happy and let them to choose his wife they enjoyed growing old with. Thus, for his communities of affection – his family Rahul decided return to India, where he settled down with his wife and family and took over the family business. Kerem also decided to return to Turkey, and Katyayani and Severa went back to India after finishing their courses. The rest of my friends, as far as I know, remained in Melbourne, continuing to renegotiate their future journeys, seeking their paths through the labyrinth of life in the midst of their transmigrant experience. They continue dreaming, daydreaming, remembering, anticipating, hoping, longing, believing, doubting, planning, revising, constructing, gossiping, teasing, loving and living in their inexhaustible multiplicity of stories that still remain to be told.

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