

# South and Southeast Asian Literature:

Classic and Postcolonial Writers in English, 1825 to Present

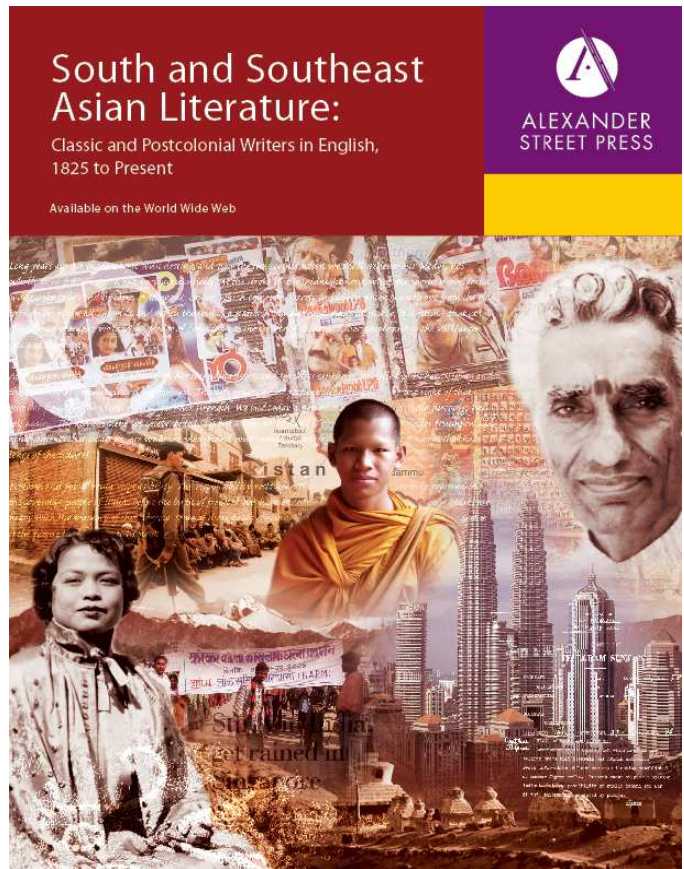
*South and Southeast Asian Literature* displays the literary imagination and linguistic inventiveness of writers who are negotiating life in a transnational world and multiple cultural identities. Scholars of literature, anthropology, linguistics, postcolonial theory and criticism, history, politics, and culture will find the collection rich in insights into modern experiences and their traditional connections. Searchable all together for the first time are 100,000 pages of fiction, short fiction, poems, interviews, and manuscript materials, written in English from the end of the colonial era to the present.

One of the most exciting elements in the collection is the interplay of literary traditions. Influences as disparate as the *Mahabharata* and Charles Dickens are evident even in the same piece. Postmodern literary techniques help tell ancient stories, and contemporary political parables are teased out of classic epics from the oral tradition. Some of the authors use formal English, while others play with the boundaries of language, merging English prefixes with local words or phrases, or writing English in the cadences of local languages.

## CONTENT

*South and Southeast Asian Literature* represents diasporas that are widely cast. The writers are from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Fiji, either by birth or through cultural identity. Their movements have taken them to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Caribbean countries such as Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Jamaica, and African countries such as South Africa and Mauritius. And their personal experiences are equally diverse—South Asian elites educated in legacy British colonial schools; Indian descendants of 19<sup>th</sup>-century indentured plantation and railroad laborers, now living in the Caribbean or Africa; or writers born into immigrant communities in London, Toronto, or New York.

Some of the authors targeted for inclusion are Meena Alexander, Tariq Ali, Rienzi Crusz, Anita Desai, Cyril Dabydeen, Amitav Ghosh, Hanif Kureishi, Ismith Khan, Michael Ondaatje, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Meera Syal, Sujata Bhatt, V.S. Naipul, Vikram Seth, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Romesh Gunsekera, Indira Ganesan, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, Samuel Dickson Selvon, Bapsi Sidhwa, Yasmine Gooneratne, I. Allan Sealy, Gopal Baratham, Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, Lawrence Chua, Arthur Yap, Kirpal Singh, Sara Suleri, Jhumpa Lahiri, Monica Ali, Zulfikar Ghose, and Manil Suri.



## HOW WILL YOU USE IT?

Students of literature will enjoy the depth and breadth of *South and Southeast Asian Literature*. Alexander Street's unique method of *Semantic Indexing*<sup>™</sup> allows searching, browsing, and analyzing in new ways. Authors are indexed for race, ethnicity, gender, birth and death dates, places of residence, occupation, and other categories. The works are searchable by date written, geographical origins, genre, and other entry points.

For students of history, diaspora studies, postcolonial studies, and related areas, *South and Southeast Asian Literature* presents the writers' observations of topics such as the legacy of the British empire; struggles for independence; the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan and the unprecedented accompanying violence; the migration of Hindus and Muslims across the new borders; the Bangladeshi war for independence from Pakistan; the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil minority; racism and the caste system; the experience of plantation laborers; the experience of the new immigrant. More generally, the literature examines notions of nationalism and transnationalism, identity and language, the individual and the collective, authenticity and hybridity, home and homeland, and the collision of the ancient and the modern.

All of these literary and historical themes can be explored with new, powerful tools for searching and word frequency analysis. Controlled vocabularies specially created for this project, along with multiple, combinable search fields, easily answer questions like these:

- Show me all interviews of Indian writers living in the United Kingdom that discuss multinational identities.
- Show me all novels that describe the Bangladeshi war for independence.
- Give me all poems written by Pakistani women.
- Which authors born in Guyana lived in Canada at some point in their lives?
- How many times did South Asian authors in the United Kingdom use *childhood* or *homeland* versus writers in India?

## EDITORIAL SELECTION

A number of bibliographies were used to build the collection, such as *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Nelson; *South Asian Literature in English: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Sanga; *Asian/Pacific Literatures in English: Bibliographies*, edited by McDowell and McDowell; *Postcolonial Literatures in English: Southeast Asia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, 1970-1992*, edited by Williams; *South Asian Diaspora Literature in English*, edited by Joshi; *Bibliography of Indo-English Literature: A Checklist of Works by Indian Authors in English, 1800-1966*, edited by Karkala and Karkala; and others.

## PUBLICATION DETAILS

*South and Southeast Asian Literature* is available on the Web, either through one-time purchase of perpetual rights or through annual subscription. It will grow to 100,000 pages of text, with selected associated images. Other Alexander Street titles in **Diversity Literature** and **Postcolonial Studies** (*Caribbean Literature*, *Black Short Fiction and Folklore*, *Black Women Writers*, *Latin American Women Writers*, *Latino Literature*, and others) are available and cross-searchable through *Alexander Street Literature*.

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