

"Australianama:

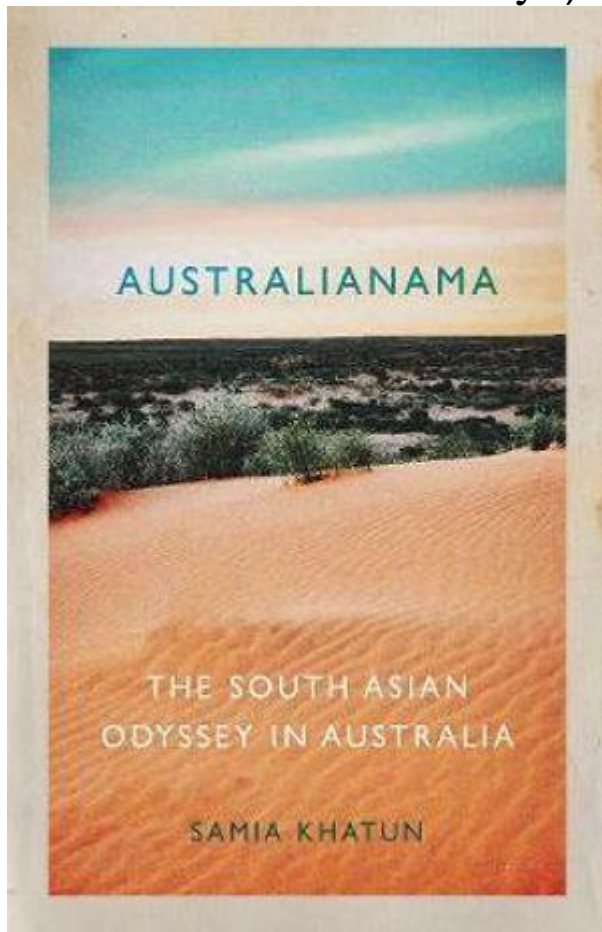
## *The South Asian Odyssey in Australia"*

by Dr Samia Khatun



(An evocative and gracefully written reflection on cultural encounters between Aboriginals and Indians in the Outback,

from the nineteenth century. )



## Description

Australian deserts remain dotted with the ruins of old mosques. Beginning with a Bengali poetry collection discovered in a nineteenth-century mosque in the town of Broken Hill, Samia Khatun weaves together the stories of various peoples colonised by the British Empire to chart a history of South Asian diaspora.

Australia has long been an outpost of Anglo empires in the Indian Ocean world, today the site of military infrastructure central to the surveillance of 'Muslim-majority' countries across the region. Imperial knowledge from Australian territories contribute significantly to the Islamic–Western binary of the post-Cold War era. In narrating a history of Indian Ocean connections from the perspectives of those colonised by the British, Khatun highlights alternative contexts against which to consider accounts of non-white people.

"Australianama " challenges a central idea that powerfully shapes history books across the Anglophone world: the colonial myth that European knowledge traditions are superior to the epistemologies of the colonised. Arguing that Aboriginal and South Asian language sources are keys to the vast, complex libraries that belie colonised geographies, Khatun shows that stories in colonised tongues can transform the very ground from which we view past, present and future.

## Author

Samia Khatun is a Bangladeshi-Australian who was born in Bangladesh, grew up and educated in Sydney, Australia from her childhood and received a Ph.D in History from the University of Sydney . She continued her research for several years as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in several universities and research centers around the world including Australia, UK, USA , New Zealand and Germany.

The above book "Australianama" authored by Samia Khatun , details many "untold stories" of the Australian History revealed through her research findings , linking early migrants from the Indian Subcontinent and Afghanistan and the local Aboriginals about 130 years ago or so, which were earlier generally ignored, misunderstood or side-tracked in the past by the White Settlers and British - Australian historians .

The book, "Australianama" , has been published in late 2018 by various international publishers, including the Oxford University Press in London, New York and Sydney. The book was earlier launched by Samia at various universities and other Forums in the USA (including New York University, Harvard University and MIT), UK (University of London), Canada (McGill University, Montreal) and Australia (Universities of Sydney and Melbourne) last December and afterwards in the current year .

Samia Khatun is a historian because she once lost her way to a mathematics lecture at the University of Sydney. Since then, she has chased truths about the past in Sydney, Antigua, Kolkata, Istanbul, Berlin, New York, Dunedin, Melbourne, London and Dhaka. Samia is a writer and a film maker. Her several documentaries on "Race Relations" were screened in the past on the ABC and SBS-TV in Australia.

She has very recently been appointed (September 2019) as "Chair " and Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Gender Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, United Kingdom.

## Reviews

"At its heart is a manifesto against the structures that silence and objectify colonised people, the myths of 'blank space' and the prevalent belief in the superiority of European thought. .... an exciting addition to Australian postcolonial history." — History Today

"Highly original, Khatun offers a new basis for storytelling, knowledge and history . . . Australianama shines a brilliant light on desert, mosque, Aboriginal, South Asian

and British peoples. What emerges is a beautifully crafted new stage for historical understanding, fresh actors and a wholly new language of vision." — Ernest Scott Prize 2019

"Every page of this iridescent books shimmers with insight. Khatun makes the world anew, drawing Australia into Indian Ocean networks, languages, stories and intellectual traditions. Exquisitely written and ingeniously crafted by a superb scholar-storyteller, Australianama will become a classic." — Isabel Hofmeyr, Global Distinguished Professor, NYU and Professor of African Literature, University of the Witwatersrand.

"By delving deep into the Australian interior, Khatun has brought forth a brilliant postcolonial history for our times. Australianama eschews the conventional migrant narrative in favour of a startlingly original perspective on settler colonialism."— Marilyn Lake, Professorial Fellow in History, University of Melbourne

"Khatun's wonderful work gives us very new ways to understand "Australia", challenging the simplistic binaries of colonial histories. It threads us all—women and men—into stories telling different histories and so offering hopes of new futures." — Heather Goodall, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Technology Sydney

"A tour de force. Khatun weaves together an extraordinary range of powerful South Asian and Aboriginal narratives from across Australia, showing how stories in colonised tongues can transform our understandings of past and present, and point the way to a more hopeful future." — Catherine Hall, Emerita Professor of Modern British Social and Cultural History, University College London.

"A riveting and timely intervention in Global feminist and migration histories, Australianama is a pioneering excavation of an Australian Aboriginal archive of memory, revealing tales of Muslim prophets, "Afghan" camel-drivers and other non-white working groups and their dreamworlds." — Indrani Chatterjee, Professor of History, University of Texas at Austin

## References:

1. <http://www.bbc.com/bengali/news-41698875>
2. <https://www.thedailystar.net/in-focus/news/australianama-the-south-asian-odyssey-australia-1674712>