



The University of
the West Indies
Institute for Gender and
Development Studies



CARIBBEAN REVIEW OF GENDER STUDIES

A Journal of Caribbean Perspectives on Gender and Feminism

Issue 6 – 2012

Indo-Caribbean Feminisms: Charting Crossings in Geography, Discourse, and Politics

Gabrielle Jamela Hosein and Lisa Outar

An examination of Indo-Caribbean feminisms is a fraught endeavor, burdened as the figure of the Indo-Caribbean woman is with the weight of historical stereotypes and with competing contemporary expectations of the role she must play in community identity and in protection of what is seen as the boundaries of Indianness in the Caribbean. While contemporary Indo-Caribbean literature and scholarship have done much to push against these flattened versions of what Caribbean Indian femininity is or should be, the dominant notions of the Indo-Caribbean woman as Hindu, as passive, as heterosexual, as conservative, as submissive, as guardian of Indian culture via her body and her morality continue to haunt us. This special issue of the *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* pulls together a wide cross-section of voices—scholarly, artistic, and activist—to try to highlight the often-unaddressed diversity of this community and to offer some sense of the critical and revolutionary interventions that Indo-Caribbean women are making in conversations about Caribbean femininity, politics, agency, and the nature of “authenticity” in diasporic contexts.

As Kris Rampersad has suggested in her assessment of early Indo-Trinidadian publications in *Finding a Place* (2002), the emergence of Indian voices onto the political and literary landscapes of the Caribbean often coincided with anxiety about the effects of creolization and modernism on Indian women. Seepersad Naipaul’s representation in *The Adventures of Gurudeva and Other Stories*, first self-published in 1946, of the Christian

Indian character, Daisy, who serves as a temptress to the eponymous Gurudeva is an early index of this concern. With her Western clothes, use of makeup, job on the American base in Trinidad and refusal to adapt to the more conservative image demanded by Gurudeva, the elder Naipaul signaled his alarm about the trajectory of Indian women in their life in the colony as they encountered new models for womanhood outside of the traditional purview of the family. The twentieth century's intense attention to Indian female comportment was not new. In fact, concern about the degradation of Indian women in conditions of indentureship, which loosened the ties that tightly bound women's sexual and economic choices, became the lynchpin for bringing down that system. The Indo-Caribbean woman was thus always an object of scrutiny and judgment for the effects of diaspora on Indians. Recently we have had attempts on the part of those like Tejaswini Niranjana (2006) to track the differences between the diasporic and the non-diasporic Indian via the female body, its adornments, and movements, as Ananya Kabir compellingly notes in her *Gender Dialogue*. The choices that Indian women and girls make, on how to dress, to dance, to date, to marry, to work, are all used to wage larger arguments about Indian engagement with nationalism, transnationalism, creolization, and modernization, usually without taking into account those same women's perspectives on their own choices. In these larger discourses, the Indo-Caribbean women and girls largely remain ciphers onto whom various agendas are imposed rather than being seen as actively shaping Caribbean culture or feminist activity in the region to their own unique needs and concerns.

Celebrations of Indo-Caribbean culture inevitably foreground the Indian female body, yet contemporary versions of Caribbean Indian femininity are rarely what are featured. Instead, over and over again, in events that explicitly address Indo-Caribbean issues, we find images of the traditionally garbed, demure Indian woman or flashy Bollywood icons standing in for the complexity and contradictory nature of Indo-Caribbean femininity. In seeking to understand the nature of various Indo-Caribbean feminist interventions, we are constrained by the obfuscations of these dominant images. Shalini Seereeram's artwork, which provides the front cover for this Special Issue, gestures toward these images, but also reminds us to look behind them. She shows Indo-Caribbean women crossing feminist, geographical, ideological, and historical waves, surrounded by feminine markers of power such as the lotus and continuing to carry responsibilities for family and community sustenance.

Yet, these figures seem to move together in sisterhood, as if they bring the erotic as power to struggles ahead, and they appear as if they are moving forward powerfully, almost stepping entirely out of the frame as others follow behind. With all its decoration, the artwork in this issue suggests that Indo-Caribbean women must continue to visualize the myths that constitute sources of power in the new femininities and feminisms that come to life in the modern and mundane. As discussed below, Jennifer Samuel's Photo Essay, "Home Away from Home," complements Seereeram's focus by highlighting how the transcendent comes to life in diverse feminisms, faces, and forms in the everyday.

Studies of Indo-Caribbean women and girls are, however, sometimes constrained too by the more critical lenses we utilize. Brinda Mehta (2004) has warned us that applying particular standards for feminist action to this community can lead us to misread acts of

agency as passivity. Particularly interesting in this issue of the CRGS, then, are the pieces that assess rural women, Hindu women, Muslim women (groups viewed as bastions of conservativeness and cultural retention) in their subtle, subversive acts of working from within their group norms to reshape institutions to meet their distinct individual and communal needs. Furthermore, while novels like Narmala Shewcharan's *Tomorrow is Another Day* boldly imagine alliances and common goals between Indo-Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean women, scholarship about these groups still often continues to delink these feminist efforts from each other. This Special Issue, therefore, considers all of the various influences on Indo-Caribbean feminist consciousness, both local and transnational, to attempt to make visible the complex landscape within which Indo-Caribbean women make choices in their daily lives and negotiate the constraints, stereotypes, and expectations that are placed upon them.

The image of the coolie woman, in particular, is one that continues to be iconic in any discussion of Indo-Caribbean femininity. Rajkumari Singh and Mahadai Das in now canonized works like "I am a Coolie," "Per Ajie," and "They Came in Ships" attempted to recuperate the term "coolie" from its perjorative origins and to point to the strength and resilience of the Indian female ancestors who made the journey from India. The harnessing of those ancestors to narratives of self-sacrifice and familial commitment, however, sometimes downplays the revolutionary nature of the choices some of those early women made. Like Gaiutra Bahadur's forthcoming *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture*, Mark Tumbridge's essay reminds us of the powerful menace that the coolie woman (who may have independently indentured herself, traveled without a husband's protection, or had the freedom to choose from an abundance of available mates) posed to patriarchal and colonial structures of containment, and the revisionism that had to happen to restore the Indian woman to the image of passivity from the active threat that she posed in the early period of indentureship and its aftermath. In his examination of the minor appearance of a freed Indian woman traveling aboard a ship carrying indentured Indians to the Caribbean in 1877 in W.H. Angel's *The Clipper Ship 'Sheila'*, Tumbridge notes the sense of inscrutability of the formerly indentured Indian woman, describing textual attempts to contain and control the undermining influence that she represents. Tumbridge highlights the liminality of the space that Indian women occupied between ties to India and the new possibilities that the Caribbean represented. Woefully, despite our efforts, this collection does not include the perspectives of Francophone Indo-Caribbean women, yet the Francophone Caribbean term "échappé coolie" for someone of mixed Indian and African origins has particular relevance to our issue since the measure of Indian ability to integrate into Caribbean society and into modern life was largely judged by Indians' ability to escape a presumed inherent coolieness, both as a mindset and as a physical condition. As with the freed woman in Angel's text, Indian women became a key index for tracking that transformation from early expectations of the laboring body to something else.

Janet Naidu's poems in this issue also track that transformation, as she envisages the older generation's yearning for education and opportunity giving way to the principled encounter that "Ammani's Cushion" represents. That poem offers the possibility of dialogue, of mutual recognition between man and woman where female ambition and

quest for personal fulfillment can be recognized and not subsumed by male requirements for succor and traditional feminine roles.

Many of the contributions in this issue challenge the common presumptions of homogeneous goals, aspirations, and lived conditions among Indian women. Halima Kassim's and Patricia Mohammed's Gender Dialogues, in particular, remind us of the important impact of religious identity on the ways in which Indian women engaged modernity, education, and life outside the home. In "Words and Work," Kassim describes the tension between religious and secular education among Muslims in the first half of the twentieth century. Her interviews with Muslim women reveal some of the costs for women caught in the crosshairs of such conflicts and opens up some consideration of what role Islamic schools may have played among young Indian women. She notes the ironic ways in which such schools, intended as a corrective alternative to the social mixing incurred through secular education, allowed for an erosion of patriarchal constraints on women and for them to negotiate some freedoms in their paths between identities as Muslim women and as members of larger Trinidadian society.

This theme is returned to in Sarah Nabbie's personal reflection on her experience of participating as a young woman in her mosque's administration and leadership. Nabbie poignantly highlights the intersecting relationships that help to shape, define, and give power to young Indian Muslim women. She reminds us how much a new generation of educated, empowered, and even feminist young women continues to draw on revered female figures such as Khadija and Aisha and the precedent set by past generations of women leaders. Religious tutelage provided the basis for her commitment to gender equality and Nabbie's story speaks back to contemporary blind spots regarding a generation of young Indian women who wield rather than abandon the resonances of religion, family, and community as they extend their own exercise of power. Unwilling to be constrained or to take constraints lightly, Nabbie draws together her Muslim identity, her feminist politics, and her ownership of, above all, choice. It is together, rather than pitted against each other, that these can provide large and small ways in which such young women may make all the difference in the world.

Kassim's interview with Rose Mohammed further suggests the need for understandings of Islamic femininity that are specific to the Caribbean context. Rather than accepting the restrictions that are imposed upon women by certain narratives of Islam that come from outside the region, we see Rose Mohammed actively shaping her own local sense of how Islam intersects with womanhood and how it allows for ethical engagement with others across ethnic and gender lines. Patricia Mohammed, for her part, while also arguing for attention to local specificity, carefully tracks the use of kinship terms and the archetypes they invoke across religious differences within the Indo-Caribbean community to show the existence of an ongoing collective Indo-Caribbean feminist project. Her Gender Dialogue reveals the ways in which new meanings are continually constructed from communal identity markers and identifies the work that remains to be done to "expand our understanding of the complexity of gender and feminist theory and practice" and to establish dialogue with other feminisms.

Lauren Pragg's essay also points to the blind spots within scholarship on Indian women, especially the presumption of heterosexual subjectivity. She challenges the heteronormativity of Caribbean feminist writing and usefully reviews works by scholars like Alison Donnell (2005), Brinda Mehta (2004), Gayatri Gopinath (2005), and Rosanne Kanhai (1999, 2011), which have addressed Indo-Caribbean sexuality, for their paradigm-shifting possibilities. By pointing out "the literal and theoretical silencing of non-heteronormative Indo-Caribbean female subjects," Pragg challenges scholars to re-examine the assumptions of the frameworks within which they work, which can further flatten our understanding of the various forms that Indian female subjectivity can take and can result in the separating out of Indo-Caribbean feminist history from a unified Caribbean feminist movement.

Gabrielle Hosein's essay further challenges the homogenization of this group by pointing out the unique challenges and negotiations of Indian girlhood in the region. She argues for the specific ways in which girls differentiate between creolization and modernization, embracing the latter as a source of power that allows them to still align themselves with certain notions of honor and respectability. Pairing Hosein's essay with Anusha Ragbir's reveals the extent to which young Indo-Caribbeans both accept and challenge the patriarchal and ethnic structures that contain them. Ragbir's description of careful ways in which sexuality and notions of Indian identity are channeled in Indian beauty pageants illuminates the tricky path that young women walk between tradition and modernity. She sees even within such a presumably anti-feminist space as the beauty pageant the challenges that girls pose to available narratives of both Indian and Caribbean femininity. In both essays, agency is something to be carefully tracked and explicated for its specific and shifting iterations.

Ragbir's and Hosein's work thus invoke Alison Donnell's reading of Indo-Caribbean women as "double agents." In seeing Indo-Caribbean beauty pageants as a reconfigured site of female agency and empowerment, Ragbir argues that they draw upon multiple modernities and push back against certain excesses they find in both India and the Caribbean. Similarly, Hosein examines girls' choices regarding culture and argues that "This does not mean that girls do not reproduce patriarchal expectations of Indo-Trinidadian girlhood. Rather, it explains how and why they both contest and reproduce these expectations, and their understandings of the opportunities and risks involved." Following Brinda Mehta's call, Hosein emphasizes a process of "rereading" on more empowering terms. She and Ragbir emphasize the roles that girls *choose* to perform.

It is in this context that Kavyta Raghunandan's critique of essentialized understandings of ethnicity and gender in Indo-Caribbean young women's identities makes sense. She locates Indo-Trinidadian female negotiations not only in the context of diaspora, but also in relation to calls to race in party politics and claims of hybridity by the Trinidad and Tobago nation-state. Raghunandan's essay usefully traces conceptions and discourses of diaspora, race and ethnicity, hybridity, and hyphenated identities in relation to Indo-Trinidadian gender negotiations. What her reflections suggest is that along a continuum of signifiers, in "the lived experience of young Indian Trinidadian women, ethnicity must be figured as a contingent, delocalised construction which is repeatedly claimed in different contexts to be essential, localised, spatialised and even bodily." This observation

is important because it reflects the diversity of approaches to self, community, tradition, modernity, and politics represented in Rosanne Kanhai's (2011) edited collection, *Bindi: The Multifaceted Lives of Indo-Caribbean Women*, which is reviewed by Lisa Outar in this issue.

The Photo Essays provide their own rich commentary on the diversity of the Indo-Caribbean gendered experience. The pictures included here from Jennifer Samuel's project on faces of the South Asian diaspora invoke the complex nexus of race, class, family configuration, religion, and work present in Trinidad. These photos, like so many contributions in this issue, refuse to see tradition and modernity, religion and consumerism, ethnic identity and inter-ethnic mixing as endpoints on a continuum. Rather, Samuel shows they are completely and complexly interlocked in ways that viscerally refuse stereotypes of who and what Indo-Trinidadian women and their politics are and are becoming. Similarly, Andil Gosine's photo essay, "Orhni and Cutlass," uses personal memories of Indo-Trinidadian foremothers to explore and fashion an iconography and aesthetic associated with women's dress and decoration in order to explore how these are "as much markers of oppression as they are evidence of the creative agency of women." His photos and the material culture and conditions that they invoke provide a lens to highlight the importance of memory, femininity, family, tradition, and labor, as well as agency, autonomy, pleasure, and refusal in mapping the contours of Indo-Caribbean feminisms, even as Indian women were shaped by and influenced colonial and postcolonial life.

In the particularly rich Gender Dialogues section of the issue, we find Ananya Kabir's reflections on the discontinuities from India and the revolutionary possibilities of Indian female embodiment in the Caribbean. Noting "the anxieties Indian diasporic rhythm cultures present to the Indian from India," her work allows us to think of the various ways in which the female body is called upon to mark what is both constitutive of and revolutionary about diasporic Indianness and, as she notes, how much "moral commentary" goes along with that. She allows for the possibility "that diasporic dislocations can potentially free the South Asian woman's body from caste/class proscriptions, or at least from expectations generated by these proscriptions that are duly internalised by us, Indian women in India." Gloria Wekker's poem, "Tower of Babel on the Suriname River" also urges a careful ethical engagement with the difference that the Indo-Caribbean woman can pose to an outside observer. The narrator's attempts to move beyond language and to read silences are in part what all of the authors in this issue are urging.

Brenda Gopeesingh's reflections in this issue's Research in Action section and Lisa Outar's dialogue with Jahajee Sisters, the New York-based activist group seeking to empower Indo-Caribbean women in the diaspora, reveal the concrete challenges facing women as they try to address the inequities and injustices facing Indian women. Gopeesingh notes the indifference with which organizations devoted to Indo-Caribbean rights and issues treat what are seen to be exclusively female issues such as anti-violence measures and raising the age of legal marriage, and the mistreatment meted out to women who speak out on such issues. The perpetuation of sexual violence and incest in the Caribbean and the gendered violence that prompted Jahajee Sisters to start their group in

New York, as they describe in their interview, all demand greater attention to the vulnerable positions in which Indian women and girls continue to be placed by their communities and the silences that surround such traumas.

Rosanne Kanhai also ends with a call to confront violence in all its guises and in all its spaces, from the family to the nation. Writing unapologetically about the complex positioning of Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the first Indian woman to become prime minister in the Caribbean, she firmly steps away from seeing Indian women at the margins and affirms their claim to belonging at the center. From here, she cautions that the larger contribution of this trajectory can be made not by ending in triumphalism, but by making “intelligent and sensitive contributions to the welfare of all women” and by refusing to excuse “Kamla” when her policies seem unjust. Combining such gender and ethnic identification with critical engagement and a commitment to solidarities across race, class, and religion, Kanhai reminds us that we are also compelled to ask “what feminist praxis can we develop from this place?”

As Mrs. Persad-Bissessar continues to lead the Trinidad and Tobago government, she will become more compromised and more controversial. Nonetheless, her historic victory in May 2010 compelled greater reflection on the nuances of being female, Indian, and Trinidadian; the pressures to erase belonging in one sphere to be accepted in another; and the risks of “difference” in a nation where power appears always racialized. “Kamla’s” victory, as part of the long struggle to break glass ceilings everywhere, was one for all women, but it was also one for Indian women in the Caribbean. “We own this identity,” Kanhai rightly concludes. As we try to figure out what the move from a more marginalized status to a more public and powerful one means for Indo-Caribbean girls’ and women’s knowledge and practice, we will also continue to chart how the unfolding negotiations of Indo-Caribbean female power articulate and constitute Indo-Caribbean and truly inclusive Caribbean feminisms. New generations will continue to work through what it means to be an Indo-Caribbean woman in public life, not reproducing patriarchal domination in social life and the state, nor being only Indian, but also Western, creole, diasporic, and modern in all its multiple and emerging forms.

In all their different styles of articulation, from poetry to scholarship and from personal reflection to dialogue across diaspora, the contributions in this issue aim to enlarge the discursive space for thinking about how scholarship on Indo-Caribbean gender negotiations intersects with that on national, regional, diasporic, and global feminisms. They aim to reflect critically on the production and politics of existing knowledge about Indo-Caribbean women and those in the diaspora, and contribute to mapping Indo-Caribbean feminist consciousness and action across history, geography, and difference. This is not a new dialogue and we draw on the literature that explicitly explores the interplay of Indian womanhood with Caribbean feminisms. In her 1998 article that reflects the perspective of both an earlier time and generation, Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen writes, “Caribbean feminism has been largely Afro-centric and simultaneously interlocked with processes of independence and national identity struggles...there is a need for the movement to reflect the experiences of women of other ethnic groups in the region. In this regard, in Trinidad and Tobago the Indo-Caribbean voice has been emerging and broadening the feminist base” (1998, 74).

This issue contributes to that broadening and deepening. What is clear is that feminist discourses on Indo-Caribbean women emphasize both continuities and transformations. Those continuities can be found in the metaphors, myths, names, and relations that continue to shape this group's identities and sources of power. At the same time, whether in relation to Mrs. Persad-Bissessar or the evolution of chutney and chutney-soca music in the more than 20 years since Drupatee Ramgoonai's entry to the public stage, gender negotiations are being worked through in ways nuanced by generational shifts, changing power relations between women and men, US and westernized Bollywood's popular cultural influence, increasing female educational advancement and economic autonomy, and a legacy of regional and international feminist activism. These foci are common across different Caribbean contexts, but should remind us to continue to open space for understanding the differences in experiences, cosmologies, and politics among Indian women and girls in Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the Francophone and Hispanophone Caribbean, and even in countries like Barbados where more recently arrived immigrants from India are embedding a new and very different generation of locally born children in the unfolding social landscape.

We, therefore, look forward to continued scholarship on the political and economic relations as well as the transnational discourses that have shaped how Indo-Caribbean women's agency, organizing, and politics are viewed, shared, studied, and theorized. Given the expansion of Caribbean masculinity studies, as a tributary flowing from the questions raised by regional feminist scholarship, we also continue to call for further interrogation of how Indo-Caribbean masculinities have been engaging and will continue to engage Indo-Caribbean feminisms—past, present, and future. As Patricia Mohammed (2003) has pointed out, feminisms' impact has dissolved “like sugar in coffee,” compelling men to become gender conscious and changing the terrain on which feminist struggles against patriarchy and for male allies take place. While this issue explores the historical roots and cultural underpinnings as well as forms of difference that have shaped Indo-Caribbean women's approaches to feminism, far more can be said about how Indo-Caribbean women and men are shaping feminism in the Caribbean and how feminism is shaping them. These are the directions for further work to which this issue points.

The rich body of scholarship on Indo-Caribbean gender identities, and on their meanings for forms of feminism that enable women to take their Indianness with them, has benefited from the interest of South Asian women in the diaspora. Major works on Indo-Caribbean ethnic and gender identities have been produced by scholars such as Tejaswini Niranjana, Aisha Khan, Viranjana Munasinghe, Brinda Mehta, Shalini Puri, and others. This speaks to the way that bodily practices, individual and collective discourses, and generational navigations developed in the Caribbean travel back to India and its diasporas, helping to inspire and create solidarities, such as those formed by Jahajee Sisters, across geography and history. It remains to us to continue to explore the correspondences as well as differences between articulations of South Asian feminisms and Indo-Caribbean feminisms, and the discourses about them, as well as the ways that a multifaceted legacy from the region travels, creating a myriad of implications.

Our goal in continuing this multi-generational, diasporic, and inter-religious conversation is to draw on the knowledge that has been created about Indo-Caribbean women's and girls' gender negotiations, but also to explore further what these mean for the scholarship, activism, and politics that mark the contours of these groups' engagement with Caribbean, Indian, diasporic (and here we mean multiple overlapping diasporas), and global feminisms. Do the contributions in this issue enable us to speak about Indo-Caribbean feminisms? What is it they enable us to say? What makes Indo-Caribbean feminisms different from as well as invested in South Asian feminisms, North American and European feminisms, black feminisms, "Third World" feminisms, and Afro-Caribbean feminisms? How does it navigate its own trajectory across, within and, at times, against these as it refuses activist and discursive forms of colonization, marginalization, invisibility, and de-legitimization.

What emerges from past writings and from the contributions in this issue is that Indo-Caribbean women and girls continue to draw on our histories and herstories, on forms of culture memorialized in women's dress, adornment, bodily movements, songs, spirituality and piety, art and mothering, on knowledge about how to conduct politics in the heteronormative and patriarchal contexts of family and religion, and on the experience of living, loving, and struggling to build solidarities that cross ethnicity, class, and nation. Theoretically, performatively, and politically, Indo-Caribbean women are engaging feminisms, understood as desires for equality, freedom from violence, sisterhood, and the right to unapologetically claim and resist inalienable ethnic markers and symbols of national and regional belonging, as the meanings of empowerment and transformation for all Caribbean women and men are persistently envisioned and worked through.

Still emerging Indo-Caribbean feminisms continue to journey, cross, arrive, return, renew, reach beyond, contest, and create. This issue's contribution is that it draws on all of those approaches and experiences as articulated across scholarly, activist, personal, and artistic forms. In enabling this Special Issue to make such a contribution, as Guest Editors, we would like to thank the CRGS Editorial Staff comprising our Editorial Assistant, Donna Drayton; Copy Editor, Jewel Fraser; and Webmaster, Daren Dhoray; the Executive Editor of the journal, Patricia Mohammed; and an earlier generation of Indo-Caribbean feminists whom we and others in this dialogue still draw on as we bring additional voices, spaces, concerns, and vision to the gendered theorizing and feminist politics of the region.

References

- Bahadur, Gaiutra. Forthcoming. *Coolie woman: The odyssey of indenture*. London: Hurst Publishers.
- Baksh-Soodeen, Rawwida. 1998. Issues of difference in Caribbean feminist theory. *Feminist Review* 59: 74-85.
- Das, Mahadai. 1996. They came in ships. In *The Routledge reader in Caribbean literature*, ed. Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, 302-303. London and New York: Routledge.
- Donnell, Alison. 2005. *Twentieth-century Caribbean literature: Critical moments in Anglophone literary history*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gopinath, Gayatri. 2005. *Impossible desires: Queer diasporas and South Asian public cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kanhai, Rosanne, ed. 2011. *Bindi: The multi-faceted lives of Indo-Caribbean women*. Kingston, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press.
- , ed. 1999. *Matikor: The politics of identity for Indo-Caribbean women*. St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies.
- Mehta, Brinda. 2004. *Diasporic (dis)locations: Indo-Caribbean women negotiate the kala pani*. Mona, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press.
- Mohammed, Patricia. 2003. Like sugar in coffee: Third wave feminism and the Caribbean. *Social and Economic Studies* 52: 5-30.
- Naipaul, Seepersad. 1976. *The adventures of Gurudeva and other stories*. London: Andre Deutsch.
- Niranjana, Tejaswini. 2006. *Mobilizing India: Women, music, and migration between India and Trinidad*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rampersad, Kris. 2002. *Finding a place: Indo-Trinidadian literature*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Shewcharan, Narmala. 1994. *Tomorrow is another day*. Leeds, UK: Peepal Tree Press.
- Singh, Rajkumari. 1996. I am a coolie. In *The Routledge reader in Caribbean literature*, ed. Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, 351-353. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 1996. Per Ajie—A tribute to the first immigrant woman. In *The Routledge reader in Caribbean literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, 304-306. London and New York: Routledge.