INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINIST THOUGHT
Beyond Gender Negotiations

Two-day Symposium
November 5–6, 2015
Faculty of Science and Technology Board Room
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

DANIELLE BOODOO-FORTUNÉ
WAKING IN THE LOTUS ROOM
2015
Commissioned for the Symposium
http://danielleboodoofortune.com
WELCOME

GABRIELLE HOSEIN AND LISA OUTAR

In 1999, Nesha Haniff wrote that “Indian women’s writings are only now emerging and the scholarship by Indian women on Indian women is slowly developing.” Almost twenty years later, the under-recognized work that preceded that moment and that which followed after it constitute a corpus for a new generation of scholars to look back at and ask a number of questions. How does it enable us to think about life today? What does it contribute to the Caribbean intellectual tradition? How has it defined feminism? What are its radical elements? What does it say about sexuality, race, family, religion, empowerment and more?

We are part of a new generation of scholars leading research about Indo-Caribbean gender relations both in the region and across the diaspora. We are documenting changes to Indo-Caribbean communities over the past thirty years. We are especially documenting the pioneering of Indo-Caribbean women in negotiating power relations in the arenas of family life, work, politics, cultural production and scholarship. We are producing knowledge about Indo-Caribbean, Dougla and Caribbean feminisms.

For our ideas to turn into the collective conversation that they should be, we have come together here with all of you to present our research, to examine the scholarship that exists, and to show its contribution as well as how it can be advanced, nuanced or completely revised. We are showcasing work on everything from
Welcome from the Chairs continued

music to literature, from sexuality to masculinity, from religious practices to self-representation, and from visual art to violence in Indo-Caribbean life. We are hoping that this symposium helps us to recognise and shape how a new generation of scholars is writing about Indian womanhoods and manhoods, from the ground up and often drawing from an existing Indo-Caribbean critical tradition rather than importing theory.

This event is part of a longer trajectory of our investigations into the forms that Indo-Caribbean feminist thinking and praxis has taken over the years. In 2012, we co-edited a special issue of the Caribbean Review of Gender Studies on the topic of Indo-Caribbean Feminisms which brought together a wide range of scholarly, literary, artistic and activist voices. We followed that with a standing-room only roundtable on Indo-Caribbean Feminisms at the Caribbean Studies Association in Grenada in 2013 where the idea for the book project began taking shape and we are now bearing down on the completion of the manuscript, Indo-Caribbean Feminist Thought: Genealogies, Theorizing and Praxis for Palgrave Macmillan which delves deeper into the histories and nuances of Indo-Caribbean gender conceptions and production of knowledge.

We will be following up with a double panel at the Caribbean Studies Association in Haiti in June 2016 which will be highlighting even more new scholarship in the field of Indo-Caribbean Studies and which will continue to point to the need for ever more nuanced, non-essentialist and flexible approaches to this field.

Through this symposium, we aim to build a diasporic research network for the study of Indo-Caribbean Women, Gender Negotiations and Feminisms, mentor new collaborative research, and establish Trinidad and Tobago as a leader in Indo-Caribbean gender studies. We envision the publication of these papers in 2016 as shaping research on Indo-Caribbean women and gender relations into the next decade and hopefully beyond.
AIMS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Targeted at scholars and students of Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean gender relations and feminisms, the symposium aims to:

- **CRITICALLY** examine more than thirty years of Indo-Caribbean feminist thought as an intellectual trajectory within Caribbean feminist scholarship

- **ASSESS** the usefulness of shifting analyses from gender negotiations to feminist navigations, taking into account the diffusion of regional, diasporic and transnational second and third wave feminisms

- **INTERROGATE** and contribute to the conceptual terrain offered by an Indo-Caribbean feminist epistemological tradition

- **ENGAGE** a politics of knowledge production that claims Indianness as multiple, ambiguous, ambivalent and mixed

- **EXPLORE** the relationship among Indo-Caribbean feminist theory, scholarly writing and a praxis of postcolonial solidarity

- **STRENGTHEN** a diasporic research network for the study of Indo-Caribbean women, gender negotiations and feminisms

- **MENTOR** new collaborative scholarship
TIMELINE

2012
CARIBBEAN REVIEW OF GENDER STUDIES, ISSUE 6
INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINISMS: CHARTING CROSSINGS IN GEOGRAPHY, DISCOURSE, AND POLITICS
Edited by Gabrielle Hosein and Lisa Outar
http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/march2013/index.asp

2013
CARIBBEAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION, 38TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, GRENADA | ROUNDTABLE — REFLECTIONS ON INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINISMS

2015
IGDS TWO-DAY SYMPOSIUM, THE UWI, ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS
INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINIST THOUGHT: BEYOND GENDER NEGOTIATIONS

2016
CARIBBEAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION, 41ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE HAITI | DOUBLE PANEL — TRANSNATIONAL, FEMINIST AND INTERDISCIPLINARY: NEW AREAS OF INQUIRY IN INDO-CARIBBEAN STUDIES

2016
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN PRESS
INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINIST THOUGHT: GENEALOGIES, THEORIZING AND PRAXIS
Edited by Dr. Gabrielle Hosein and Dr. Lisa Outar.
OVERVIEW  
TWO-DAY SYMPOSIUM

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

8:00 – 9:00  Registration
9:00 – 10:00  Introductory remarks | Overview
10:00 – 10:30  Break
10:30 – 12:00  PANEL ONE
12:00 – 1:00  Lunch
1:00 – 2:30  PANEL TWO
2:30 – 2:45  Break
2:45 – 4:15  PANEL THREE
6:30 – 9:30  Divali Nagar Visit

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

9:30 – 11:00  PANEL FOUR
11:00 – 11:30  Break
11:30 – 1:00  PANEL FIVE
1:00 – 2:00  Lunch
2:00 – 3:30  ROUND TABLE
3:30 – 4:30  CLOSING DISCUSSION
7:30 – 10:00  A LITERARY EVENING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

8:00 – 9:00  Registration

9:00 – 10:00  Introductory remarks and overview of aims of book collection
Gabrielle Hosein and Lisa Outar

10:00 – 10:30  Break

10:30 – 12:00  PANEL ONE

PATRICIA MOHAMMED
“The Road from Custody to Independence”

PREEIA SURAJBALI
“Indo-Caribbean Feminist Epistemology: Feminist Poetics Informing its Emergence”

ANDIL GOSINE
“My Mother’s Baby: Wrecking Work after Indentureship”

Discussant:
RAWWIDA BAKSH

12:00 – 1:00  Lunch
1:00 – 2:30

**PANEL TWO**

**ANITA BAKSH**
“Indenture, Land, and Feminist Consciousness in the Literature of Rajkumari Singh and Mahadai Das”

**LISA OUTAR**
“Between the Cane and the Deep Blue Sea: Relational Indianness in Mauritius and the Caribbean”

**TULI CHATTERJI**
“Mini Death, And A Rebirth”: Talking the Crossing in Shani Mootoo’s *Moving Forward Sideways Like A Crab*”

Discussant: **RAMABAI ESPINET**

2:30 – 2:45 Break
2:45 – 4:15  

**Panel Three**

**Gabrielle Hosein**  
“Dougla Poetics and Politics in Indo-Caribbean Feminist Thought: Reflection and Reconceptualization”

**Kaneesha C. Parsard**  
“Cutlass: Objects toward a Dougla Feminist Theory of Representation”

**Sue Ann Barratt**  
“Nicki Minaj, Indian In/visibility and the Paradox of Dougla Feminism”

Discussant:  
**Sheila Rampersad**

6:30 – 9:30  

**Diwali Nagar Visit**  
Bus will leave The University Inn at 6.30 p.m.
PANEL FOUR

MICHAEL NIBLETT

RHODA REDDOCK
“Indo-Caribbean Masculinities: Where are We Now?”

STEPHANIE L. JACKSON
“Manifesting Mariyamman, Gendering Indo-Guyanese ‘Madrasi Religion,’ and the Emergence of a Tamil Diasporic Consciousness”

Discussant:
ROSANNE KANHAI

11:00 – 11:30 Break
11:30 – 1:00

**PANEL FIVE**

**KAVITA A. SINGH**
“Parallel Feminisms: Jahaji-bhain in Carnival”

**KRISTAL GHSYAWAN**
“(Un)Settling the Politics of Identity and Sexuality among Indo-Trinidadian Same-Sex Loving Women”

**ANGELIQUE V. NIXON**

Discussant:
**SHALINI PURI**

1:00 – 2:00

Lunch
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2015 CONTINUED

2:00 – 3:30  ROUND TABLE

RAMABAI ESPINET
ROSANNE KANHAI
SHALINI PURI
SHEILA RAMPERSAD
RAWWIDA BAKSH

3:30 – 4:30  CLOSING DISCUSSION

7:30 – 10:00  INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINISMS:
A LITERARY EVENING

Bus will leave The University Inn at 7.00 p.m.
INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINISMS
A LITERARY EVENING

FEATURING
READINGS BY WRITERS
IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

AURORA HERRERA
KEVIN JARED HOSEIN
SHIVANEE RAMLOCHAN
RAMABAI ESPINET

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH
7.30 – 10:00 P.M.

‘BIG BLACK BOX’
Murray Street
just off Ariapita Avenue
Port of Spain

Door 40.00 TTD
Refreshments
Cash bar
Indo-Caribbean themed books will be on sale.
INDO-CARIBBEAN FEMINISMS: A LITERARY EVENING

THE WRITERS

AURORA HERRERA

has been working in the journalism industry for the past ten years and has her own column in the Trinidad Guardian. Her career has let her discover roles both in front of and behind the camera from host to co-director to producer to post-production coordinator. She is the official blogger for the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival and for the Bocas Lit Fest as well as for TedXPortoSpain. She has recently begun more creative writing.

KEVIN JARED HOSEIN

is the winner of the 2015 Commonwealth Short Story Prize for the Caribbean Region for his story, "The King of Settlement 4." His earlier Commonwealth Short Story Prize entry, "The Monkey Trap," is featured in the Peepal Tree Press and Akashic Books' anthology, Pepperpot: Best New Stories from the Caribbean. In addition, “The Monkey Trap” was also shortlisted for the Small Axe Literary Prize and the Caribbean Short Story 2013 Prize. His debut book Littletown Secrets was published in 2013. His poem, "The Wait is So, So Long," was adapted into a short film which was awarded a Gold Key at the New York-based Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

SHIVANEI RAMLOCHAN

is a Trinidadian fiction writer, poet and critic. She reviews books and plays for the Trinidad Guardian’s Sunday Arts Section, and is the book review editor for Caribbean Beat Magazine. Shivanee is the official blogger and social media manager for Paper Based Bookshop, Trinidad’s sole independent Caribbean-specialty bookseller, and she functions in the same capacity for the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Trinidad’s annual literary festival. Her creative writing has been published in tongues of the ocean, Draconian Switch, and The Caribbean Review of Books.

RAMABAI ESPINET

is a writer, critic and academic. Her published works include the poetry collection Nuclear Seasons (1991), the children’s books The Princess of Spadina (1992) and Ninja’s Carnival (1993) as well as short fiction and poetry published in anthologies such as Her Mother’s Ashes, Aurat Durbar, Green Cane and Juicy Flotsam, Another Way to Dance and Wheel and Come Again. She is also the author of The Swinging Bridge (2003) and the poetry/performance piece, Indian Robber Talk. She edited Creation Fire, an anthology of Caribbean women’s poetry in several languages. In 2008, she was awarded the Nicolas Guillen prize for Philosophical Literature. Coming Home is a documentary on her work by Leda Serene /Caribbean Tales. Forthcoming is a collection of short fiction, Shooting Trouble.
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<thead>
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<td>City University of New York</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anitabaksh1@yahoo.com">anitabaksh1@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>Dr. Anita Baksh is Assistant Professor of English at LaGuardia Community College at the City University of New York. Her teaching and publications focus on Caribbean literature, South Asian diasporic literatures, postcolonial theory, feminist theory, and composition.</td>
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<td>The UWI St Augustine</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Sue-ann.Barratt@sta.uwi.edu">Sue-ann.Barratt@sta.uwi.edu</a></td>
<td>Dr. Sue Ann Barratt is an Instructor III at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. She has a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies from the IGDS which was achieved through a thesis which focused on the relevance of perceptions of gender identity to interpersonal communication conflict. Her previous undergraduate and post-graduate education was centred on communication studies and political science.</td>
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<td>Dr. Tuli Chatterji is Adjunct Faculty in the English Department of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT. Her research interests include Caribbean Studies, World Anglophone Literature, and Queer Theory.</td>
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<td>Krystal Ghisyawan is a Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology at The University of the West Indies, St Augustine. She holds a Double Honours B.A. in Anthropology and South Asian Studies from York University, Toronto (2007-2011), and is currently pursuing Ph.D. level multi-disciplinary research with same-sex loving women in Trinidad.</td>
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<td>ANDIL GOSINE</td>
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<td>Dr. Andil Gosine is Associate Professor in Sociology, and in the Graduate Programs of Social and Political Thought, and Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies, at York University.</td>
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<td>Stephanie Jackson is a graduate student at the City University of New York Graduate Center and has conducted research on music, transnationalism, and religiosity in Guyana and New York City. She currently teaches Popular Music of the Caribbean at John Jay College.</td>
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<td>Patricia Mohammed is Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies and Campus Coordinator, School for Graduate Studies and Research at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. The combination of the two parts of the title of her Professorship contains the interests that have preoccupied Dr. Mohammed as a scholar over the last three decades: that of understanding what shapes our class, ethnic and gender identities and produces the culturally specific ways in which we produce and live.</td>
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<td>MICHAEL NIBLETT</td>
<td>University of Warwick</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Niblett is a Research Fellow in the Yesu Persaud Centre for Caribbean Studies at Warwick University. His research interests centre upon Caribbean literature and culture, as well as world literature, environmental history, and critical theory. He is interested in the literary encoding of ecology, modernity, nationhood, and class struggle in texts produced in the Caribbean and in other peripheral and semi-peripheral areas within the capitalist world-system.</td>
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<td>Dr. Angelique Nixon is a Lecturer at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago. She specializes in Caribbean and postcolonial studies, feminist theories and praxis, and gender and sexuality studies. Her research, cultural criticism, and poetry have been published widely.</td>
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<td>Kaneesha Cherelle Parsard is a Ph.D. candidate in African American Studies, American Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Yale University. Her dissertation, “Improper Dwelling: Space, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernity in the British West Indies, 1838-1962,” examines British West Indian literary and visual forms to illuminate three dwelling spaces—the landscape, barrack yard, and the house—in which African and Indian plantation labourers and their descendants challenged colonial attempts at social and spatial control between emancipation and the independence period.</td>
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<td>Rhoda Reddock is Professor of Gender and Development, and Deputy Principal at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. Her research output has revolved around the themes of gender, ethnicity and nationalism, masculinities, sexualities, women and social movements, and environmental studies.</td>
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<td>Dr. Rawwida Baksh is a researcher, writer, policy adviser and activist. She was a founding member of Women Working for Social Progress and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action. She lectured in Language and Linguistics at The UWI, St. Augustine, was Head of Gender at the Commonwealth Secretariat, London; and Program Leader on Women’s Rights and Citizenship at the International Development Research Centre, Canada. She is an international gender and development consultant and was lead editor of the recently published <em>Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements</em>, OUP, 2015.</td>
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<td>University of Toronto</td>
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<td>Dr. Ramabai Espinet is a writer, critic, academic. Her works include the novel, <em>The Swinging Bridge</em>, as well as short fiction and poetry including <em>Nuclear Seasons</em> and <em>Indian Robber Talk</em>. In 2008, she was awarded the Nicolas Guillen prize for Philosophical Literature. <em>Coming Home</em> is a documentary on her work by Leda Serene /Caribbean Tales. Forthcoming is a collection of short fiction, <em>Shooting Trouble</em>.</td>
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<td>Dr. Rosanne Kanhai is the editor of <em>Matikor: The Politics of Identity for Indo-Caribbean Women</em> and <em>Bindi: The Multifaceted Lives of Indo-Caribbean Women</em> as well as the author of <em>The Green Face Man: Poetry and Short Fiction and Rage and Renewal: Poetry and Short Fiction</em> and several journal articles. Her areas of interest include gender studies, comparative literatures and cultures and her work in progress deals with creative explorations of bold-face, grounded-ness and healing.</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:sheilarampersad@yahoo.com">sheilarampersad@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>Dr. Sheila Rampersad lectured in English Language at The UWI St Augustine from 1998 to 2001 before serving as co-ordinator of The UWI’s English Language Foundation Programme from 2003 to 2006. She has written numerous articles in academic and non-academic publications in Africa, India, the US and Britain and has been active in journalism – television, radio and predominantly print - for more than two decades. She continues research in culture and language and is an Express columnist and radio analyst.</td>
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<td>Dr. Shalini Puri is Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Pittsburgh and Director of the Literature Program there. She works on postcolonial theory and cultural studies of the global south with an emphasis on the Caribbean. She has just completed a book entitled <em>The Grenada Revolution in the Caribbean Present: Operation Urgent Memory</em>, which studies the conflicting cultural memories of the Grenada Revolution as they surface in the arts, everyday life, landscape, and the diaspora.</td>
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<td><strong>GABRIELLE HOSEIN</strong></td>
<td>Lecturer, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>Dr. Gabrielle Jamela Hosein is a Lecturer at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies. She has a B.A. (Hons) from University of Toronto, an M.Phil from The University of the West Indies, and a Ph.D. from University College London. Her main areas of current research are gender and politics, sexualities, and Caribbean feminisms. She has been researching Indo-Caribbean gendered identities since 1999. Her MPhil thesis focused on Indo-Trinidadian girlhood and its findings can be found in <em>Gender in the Twentieth Century, Bindi: The Multifaceted Lives of Indo-Caribbean Women</em>, and the <em>Caribbean Review of Gender Studies</em>. Her PhD research on Indo-Muslim women’s leadership is published as a chapter in the edited collection <em>Islam and the Americas</em>. With Dr. Lisa Outar, she coedited a special issue of <em>The Caribbean Review of Gender Studies</em> that focused on Indo-Caribbean Feminisms in 2012. Her five country research project, <em>Negotiating Gender, Policy and Politics in the Caribbean</em>, will be published as a co-edited collection by Rowland and Littlefield Press (2016). Her blog, “Diary of a Mothering Worker”, is published weekly in the Trinidad Guardian.</td>
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<td><strong>LISA OUTAR</strong></td>
<td>Independent Scholar, <a href="mailto:leoutar@gmail.com">leoutar@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Dr. Lisa Outar who formerly taught postcolonial literature at St. John’s University and is now an independent scholar, researches Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean literature. She has a B.A. from Princeton University and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English from The University of Chicago. She specializes in writings by and about Indo-Caribbeans. Her work has appeared in the journals <em>South Asian Review, Caribbean Journal of Education, South Asian History and Culture, Caribbean Review of Gender Studies, South Asian Diaspora, in Stabroek News</em> and in the edited book collections <em>South Asian Transnationalisms</em> (Routledge 2012) and <em>Beyond Windrush: Rethinking Postwar Anglophone Caribbean Literature</em> (University Press of Mississippi, 2015). With Dr. Gabrielle Hosein, she coedited a special issue of <em>The Caribbean Review of Gender Studies</em> that focused on Indo-Caribbean Feminisms in 2012 and is now completing an edited book collection with Dr. Hosein called <em>Indo-Caribbean Feminist Thought: Genealogies, Theorizing and Praxis</em> to be published by Palgrave Macmillan. She is also working on a manuscript about early twentieth-century Indo-Caribbean female writers. She serves as an editor of the <em>Journal of West Indian Literature</em>.</td>
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THANK YOU TO THE TEAM

Organizers
Dr. Gabrielle Hosein, IGDS, The UWI, St. Augustine Unit
Dr. Lisa Outar, Independent Scholar
Sommer Hunte, Research Assistant
Kathryn Chan, Media

Special Thanks to
Professor Patricia Mohammed and Dr. Paula Morgan
Tennille Fanovich, Asha Inniss
Whitney Katwaroo, Amilcar Sanatan
and
the entire staff of the IGDS
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CARIBBEAN AIRLINES
SPEAKERS INCLUDE

ANITA BAKSH City University of New York
RAWWIDA BAKSH International Gender Consultant
SUE ANN BARRATT The UWI St Augustine
TULI CHATTERJI Sacred Heart University
RAMABAI ESPINET University of Toronto
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