Elusive mother country:
The literature of the Indian-Caribbean Windrush

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ABSTRACT
The recent commemorations in 2018 and 2023, of the 70th and 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks, have prompted a deeper engagement with the history of post-war migration from the Caribbean to the ‘motherland’. As public awareness of the economic contribution the Windrush Generation (1948–1971) made to Britain grows, there is also an increasing curiosity in the artistic output of this community and their descendants.

However, when museums and cultural institutions choose to engage with the history of the Windrush Generation and its influence, such representations focus on Black Britain and a celebration of the African-Caribbean presence; little or no acknowledgment is given to the community of Indian-Caribbean heritage, who also formed

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part of the Windrush Generation. Frequently for example, art exhibitions, book lists and musical celebrations ignore the Indian-Caribbean presence with the UK’s Guardian newspaper recently publishing an article entitled ‘Windrush at 75: books that shaped the black British experience’ (author’s italics). In this article I seek to analyze the literary contribution made by writers of Indian-Caribbean heritage, who were part of the Windrush Generation. From Sam Selvon, the author of the classic Windrush novel The Lonely Londoners to lesser-known writers such as Lakshmi Persaud and Elly Niland, I argue that Indian-Caribbean writers have compicated the binaries of the current Windrush narrative and have perhaps been afforded less consideration as a result. My aim in this article is to offer a preliminary analysis of the literary odyssey of Indian-Caribbean writers during this period

KEYWORDS
Indenture, Windrush, Indian-Caribbean literature, The Other Windrush, South Indian Indenture, Guyana

‘Just because you ain’t got a mother don’t mean that England will mother you, you stupid mother-fucker’.1

Between 1948 and 1971 around 450,000 men, women and children made the journey from the Anglophone Caribbean to the UK. Their story has dominated the migration history of post-war Britain because it heralded the start of large-scale migration to the UK from British colonies and the Commonwealth, signifying the moment at which the Empire came home. Taking their name from the Empire Windrush, which docked at Tilbury in 1948 with over 800 Caribbean migrants, the Windrush Generation’s achievements have rightly been celebrated in many fields, including literature. Yet while the UK’s children, young people and university students are frequently offered opportunities to explore the literary Windrush through the poems of writers of African-Caribbean heritage such as John Agard, Grace Nichols or Benjamin Zephaniah and novelists like Caryl Phillips and Andrea Levy, many pass through the British education system unaware of

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the contribution made to this body of literature by Indian-Caribbean writers, descendants of the system of indenture who were also part of the Windrush migration.

In this article, I offer an analysis of the work of four writers of Indian-Caribbean heritage, arguing that their work makes vital connections between the two imperial migrations of indenture and Windrush. This article comes at a time of growing awareness in the UK of the need for a more nuanced understanding of twentieth-century migration to the UK from the Caribbean. The presence of the descendants of indenture in the Windrush migration has been represented in small interventions by the British Library and the Migration Museum in 2017 and 2018. Moments like this have now expanded to dedicated events like The Museum of London’s ‘Indo + Caribbean: The Creation of a Culture’, the first exhibition in the UK to celebrate the lives of the Indian-Caribbean Windrush Generation. Further, Hannah Lowe, the British poet, has added a much-needed dimension to this story by drawing public attention to the Chinese presence in the Caribbean. In discussing her Jamaican father’s journey to the UK on the Ormonde in 1947, she has also increased understanding around not only the diversity of the migration but also the existence of Caribbean migration to the UK before the Windrush.

The publication of recent anthologies like *Mother Country: Real Stories of the Windrush Children* (2018) and *The Other Windrush: Legacies of Indenture in Britain’s Caribbean Empire* (2021), which include interviews and life writing by and about descendants of indenture in Windrush, reflect a readership ready to engage with a more inclusive understanding of the Windrush Generation. Yet in spite of a slow move towards more inclusive representations of the Windrush migration from cultural institutions, there has so far been no extended evaluation of the rich literature that has come from the experiences of Windrush era migrants who were of Indian-Caribbean heritage. It is hoped that this article may offer a preliminary exploration of the preoccupations of four Indian-
Caribbean writers, poets and novelists, who lived through this migration highlighting voices that speak to a crucial part of the region’s post-emancipation history and identity.

Looking briefly at writing by Samuel Selvon and V.S Naipaul, and later at work by David Dabydeen, Moses Nagamootoo, Elly Niland and Lakshmi Persaud, I want to argue that for descendants of indenture, the legacy of the system is omnipresent in their representations of the Windrush migration. We see this manifested in characters carrying the burden of a community’s expectations, reflecting a people whose collective desire is to exceed the boundaries of their plantation origins. Yet it is also seen in the representation of Windrush stories that reject this pursuit of ‘achievement’ in the imperial metropole, connecting these endeavours, as we see in the work of Moses Nagamootoo, to the tragic depopulation of villages like those portrayed in his novel. This is echoed in David Dabydeen’s poetry and his second collection of verse, *Coolie Odyssey* (1988), which is in part a lament for the elderly Guyanese abandoned by migration to the United Kingdom and North America when Forbes Burnham’s premiership (1964–1985) and his government’s anti-Indian policies, drove thousands of descendants of the indenture system from the country.6

It is impossible to begin a consideration of the literature of the Indian-Caribbean Windrush without acknowledging two of its first writers, Samuel Selvon (1923–1994) and V.S Naipaul (1932–2018), who both arrived in the UK in 1950. In the public mind, Naipaul may not be immediately connected to the Windrush era and this is undoubtedly due to the breadth of his oeuvre and what some may perceive to be his rejection of a Caribbean identity. In contrast, Selvon is widely understood to have written the literary work of the Windrush period in his classic novel on the physical and psychological struggles of the men that people *The Lonely Londoners* (1956).7 Despite Selvon’s admission that he wrote the principal character Moses as an Indian-
Caribbean man, *The Lonely Londoners* is continually referred to as a work of Black British literature; its various covers over the years portraying photographs or illustrations that depict African-Caribbean Windrushers during this period. As far as both writers are concerned, as the scholar Lisa Outar has pointed out, Selvon and Naipaul ‘are rarely examined’ in relation to being both Indian and Caribbean in a diasporic context.

However, there is much to be reflected on here around ideas of African and Indian solidarity and the notion of Jahaji Bhai, which I would argue motivated Selvon to choose not to publicly define Moses as Indian-Caribbean. Many Indian-Caribbean migrants who experienced life in Britain during the 1950s and early 1960s were labelled ‘Black’ by white Britons; they consequently identified with the struggles of African-Caribbean migrants experiencing similar discrimination. Important Indian-Guyanese figures like the publisher Arif Ali, activist Roy Sawh and lawyer Rudy Narayan are described by academic Winston James as playing ‘an integral part’ in the Black movement in the UK. As Selvon himself writes of the period: ‘To the English, as long as you were not white you were Black and it did not matter if you came from Calcutta or Port of Spain’. Rather than possessing any intent to erase the minority Indian-Caribbean experience, Selvon could be argued to have intentionally resurrected the idea of Jahaji Bhai as a hybrid space that could incorporate both Black and Asian Windrush narratives. His novel, at its heart, representing the brotherhood of a migrant community negotiating a hostile colonial space. Indeed, one is reminded here of the Windrush legend that the great Barbadian writer George Lamming shared an Imperial brand typewriter with Selvon on their voyage to England in 1950.

Both Selvon and Naipaul turned back to Trinidad in the process of penning their first works in London; Selvon with a *Brighter Sun* (1952) and Naipaul with *Miguel Street* (1958), a collection of stories based on the lives of the inhabitants of the street on which
he grew up. Much of what Naipaul wrote later, about the journey of becoming a writer, in works like *Finding the Centre* (1984) and *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) reflected painfully on the isolation of the experience of being a migrant in London and toyed with ideas formed in Trinidad about where ‘the centre’ might be for a young Indian-Trinidadian man:

And it was that fear, a panic about failing to be what I should be, rather than simple ambition, that was with me when I came down from Oxford in 1954 and began trying to write in London. My father had died the previous year. Our family was in distress. I should have done something for them, gone back to them. But without having become a writer, I couldn’t go back. In my eleventh month in London, I wrote about Bogart. I wrote my book; I wrote another. I began to go back (Naipaul: 1987: 72)

What makes this process most interesting in the case of Naipaul is that according to *Finding the Centre*, this creative process, this ‘going back’ was a specific return to the Indian community of the street that he had lived on in Port of Spain as a child and his start, as a novelist, comes from that first line that he writes in the BBC freelancers room, which in turn becomes his first completed literary work. It is the distinct remembrance of Indian-Caribbean roots that drives the creative process as he reflects on Hat and Bogart, the characters of who would come to form a key part of *Miguel Street*.

Without doubt the work of these two writers contributed to the creation of an atmosphere in which later writers of the Windrush era felt freer to articulate a distinctly Indian-Caribbean portrait of the Windrush experience. This was no doubt aided by the increase in South Asian migration to the UK in the 1960s and 1970s and the decrease in popularity of the concept of political Blackness, as Black and South Asian communities in the UK increasingly turned away from collective organizing against racism, in favour of individual community groups. Two of David Dabydeen’s works, *Coolie Odyssey* (1988), a collection of poems and his first novel *The Intended* (1991),
both explore Indian-Caribbean life in London during the Windrush era as does Elly Niland’s 2021 essay ‘From BG to GB’ and her poetry published in the collections *In Retrospect* and *Cornerstones*. Leeds-based publisher Peepal Tree Press have been instrumental in supporting Indian-Caribbean writing in the last four decades and it is from within their list that we find two worthy, yet very different studies of the Indian-Caribbean experience of Windrush. The first of these is Moses Nagamootoo’s novel *Hendree’s Cure* (2001) and the second is Lakshmi Persaud’s *Daughters of Empire* (2012).

While each of these works have different concerns, I will argue that they are marked by an ambivalence towards the Windrush experience. Persaud and Niland in particular explore the extent to which a defiant type of survival is possible in the imperial centre. It is solely Moses Nagamootoo’s *Hendree’s Cure* that offers a universally damning critique of the Windrush narrative in its rejection of the dual forces of colonialism and capitalism that are seen to propel Guyanese across the Atlantic during this period. Nagamootoo’s novel is somewhat unique in the Caribbean literary canon in that it is currently the only work of fiction to focus specifically on the South Indian Caribbean community in an anglophone Caribbean setting. Set in the 1950s and 1960s in a small village named Whim in Berbice, Guyana, its commitment to honouring this minority Indian group, known within Guyana and Trinidad as ‘Madrasis’, is carried out with skill and great humour.

As I have argued previously, Nagamootoo’s first novel makes a crucial contribution to Indian-Caribbean literature. The novel has two equally important functions, first it represents a first-generation Indian-Guyanese community negotiating survival outside of the colonial plantation system and secondly it depicts a minority community in Guyana whose religious and cultural traditions, as noted by sociologists and musicologists have made a considerable contribution to the country.

It is entirely in keeping with the spirit of this novel – one that questions both the capitalist and colonial framework that the vil-
lagers repeatedly seek to evade – that *Hendree’s Cure* presents a counter to the Windrush narratives that focus on the achievement and advancement of a central character whose struggles to negotiate a space of belonging ultimately terminate in success or tragedy. *Hendree’s Cure* disrupts this power balance in a chapter where one of the novel’s central characters, a young fisherman named Tilokie, travels to London following the thousands of other (then) colonial subjects who believed in the possibility of a better life and greater opportunity in the UK. Much is made in this novel of the political consciousness of the inhabitants of Whim and their efforts to support themselves outside of the colonial system. Like many South Indians in Guyana during this period Tilokie is a fisherman and this is in keeping with the South Indian community’s desire to remain independent of the colonial sugar plantations. But this aside Tilokie is not impervious to the wave that sees the country’s young swept up in migration to Britain. He struggles through the ‘contradiction’ that England is where his parents believed happiness lay and his own awareness that ‘back home’ is a place ‘which like himself was crying out for self-definition and independence’.

Tilokie’s dreams of ‘Hingland’ are brutally disrupted with the reality of a grim metropolitan landscape peppered with the excreta of pigeons and dogs (Nagamootoo 2000:79). What becomes obvious to Tilokie during his time in London is that he cannot live without the village and the accomplishment of his mission to make a drum, to replicate the familiar South Indian sounds of Whim, offer him his only relief from an otherwise miserable existence in a windowless basement room, where he lives when he is not working as a litter picker at Battersea Funfair. Initially optimistic, Tilokie leaves Guyana for England carrying Ovaltine tins stuffed full of ingredients like achar, tamarind, and dried huri fish. His intention is to make his own ‘chooka’ with these products by mixing them with ‘juicy English onions’. Here the Ovaltine tin is symbolic: he carries his tribute in this vessel of Empire, proposing a mixture
that he comes to learn during his time in England, is impossible. This fact is vividly represented in his relationship with the English girl Maria, who works as a food server at the Funfair.

It is perhaps easy to dismiss Tilokie’s shabby treatment of Maria, the ‘juicy English onion’ he begins a relationship with, as misogynistic. She is dedicated to him, moving into his home, and ultimately travelling back to Guyana with him. Even the narrator, who up until this point has cast Tilokie as a lovable and sympathetic character, balks at explaining the cowardly way that he dismisses her from the village (Nagamootoo 2000: 91). But what I am more interested in here is what Maria is intended to represent in this chapter. I would argue that Maria embodies extractive British colonialism in Guyana, which is repeatedly represented as a soucouyant, sucking away at the life of the country.22 The text dwells considerably on Maria’s weight leaving a sense of her as complicit in a greedy Empire grown fat on the labour of others. Maria is also the means by which Tilokie comes to understand himself in relation to Empire and to grow confident enough to discard any ideas he may have had about British superiority. Maria and London jointly contribute to the psychological decolonization of Tilokie; we witness his eloquence in his interactions with her as he explains the Indian presence in Guyana. We further chart his development in his philosophical reflections on the ethics of his place as a migrant in London when Guyana is fighting to define itself:

> By 1953 Tilokie could no longer suppress his desire to return home, could no longer deal with his restlessness. He had come feeling that England owed him an easy life as recompense for the riches that she had taken from the sugar estates for three centuries. (...) He found further justification for his anger after hearing the news that the British had landed troops in Guiana. (Nagamootoo 2001: 89)

Tilokie’s final rejection of England occurs in a powerful scene where he strips off the Windrush passengers’ garb of suit and tie
abandoning Maria at church to play tassa at a local wedding. Seen through the lens of the Windrush migration this scene is incredibly powerful as close analysis can frame this moment as a total rejection of the Windrush narrative. As Stuart Hall has written, the suit and tie, the garb of the male Windrusher, was the same outfit worn by men to church in the British West Indies. This image, combined with that of Tilokie playing his South Indian drum, work to form a total rejection of the Windrush migration. One cannot help but recall in this moment the famous recording of the great Calypsonian Lord Kitchener made on the Windrush’s arrival at Tilbury Docks where he sang ‘London is the place for me’. Not only is London not the place for Tilokie, but it is the tassa and not the calypso that speaks to his experience as an Indian-Caribbean and as he plays out the tune that prompts Maria to leave the village ‘Tilokie na want am, Tilokie na want am’ he is targeting not just Maria, but England and the world beyond the village (Nagamootoo 2001:83).

The representation of Empire as vampiric, which is threaded through Hendree’s Cure, is a metaphor that resounds in David Dabydeen’s depictions of the Indian-Caribbean Windrush experience in Coolie Odyssey. This is manifested in accounts of sexual relationships with white women in particular. But what is distinct to Dabydeen’s work, written during the time of an exodus of Indian-Guyanese from the country, is that it speaks to the painful realization of decolonization for Indian-Guyanese, which is far from the hopeful picture imagined by Tilokie in London. Many of the poems are set in the period of Forbes Burnham’s dictatorship when active discrimination against Indian-Guyanese operated across employment sectors. The poems lament the resulting depopulation of the country that leave ‘Ma’ the revered grandmother and embodiment of Indian culture alone in her kitchen. An environment is thus built in this volume – of cultural isolation from both Guyana and England – that allow the poet to create a community that at once symbolises identity and comfort; a com-
munity that is comprehensible only to itself. This idea lives in the character of Harilall for example, whose skill as a bowler is unknown to the white population of Balham. In London Harilall is bound by the limits of the imagination of the British, for whom he can only be ‘the local Paki’. Similarly, in the poem ‘El Dorado’, after the death of the central character Juncha, his last rites are carried out by the local women who bathe his body and then: ‘bury him like treasure,/ The coolie who worked for two shillings all day/ But kept his value from the overseer’.28

Dabydeen, himself part of the Windrush Generation, takes up these ideas further in his first novel, *The Intended* (1991), which is set at the end of the Windrush period.29 In this novel the narrator, who arrives in London as a child and is subsequently abandoned by his father to the social services, strives to complete the secondary education that will eventually lead him to Oxford University. In the process he forms his own family with the young men he meets at school and at the care home to which he is temporarily assigned. His companions, men of colour like himself, are defined in various ways by the immigrant experience. His desire to be part of England exists alongside a simultaneous acknowledgement that he will never be accepted. Like Juncha of ‘El Dorado’ it is only amongst community that his value is known. Accordingly, it is at Nasim’s house, where he is given refreshments and praised for his academic record that he feels ‘treasured’, and it is to the South Asian community that he looks for accommodation when he leaves ‘the home’.30

The extent to which the funfair at Battersea functions as a microcosm of Empire in both *Hendree’s Cure* and *The Intended* cannot be understated. The funfair was a part of the Festival of Britain in 1951 and was intended to celebrate the country’s achievements and its future progress, offering diversion to a nation still recovering from the Second World War. Its occurrence just at the start of the Windrush era is key as we can’t separate the migrant labour that will realize this future economic progress from the arrival of
workers from Empire. Both Tilokie and ‘the boy’ operate at the lowest rungs of this funfair; Tilokie works as a litter picker, elevating this status in letters to his family in Guyana to a position as an ‘environmental engineer’. The unnamed narrator of *The Intended* sells tickets to the World Cruise ride. As he passes through the ‘sites’ while cleaning them before the day’s visitors arrive, we are aware that they deliberately speak to a romanticized and paternalistic vision of Empire and are reminded of the Great Exhibition of 1851 a centenary earlier, which featured items intended to show the enormity and riches of the British Empire. This however is not the Great Exhibition and part of the boy’s cleaning ritual involves erasing racist and vulgar ‘go home’ graffiti from the drawings that illustrate the World Cruise. The boy’s decision to pocket part of the takings for the tickets he collects features almost like a form of reparatory justice and signifies his growing awareness that the prosperity of Britain is not unconnected to his own ‘disordered existence’.

There is something to be said about the way in which both Janet, the boy’s girlfriend in *The Intended* and Maria, Tilokie’s love interest, symbolize Empire to the Indian-Caribbean migrant; simultaneously attracting while provoking feelings of violence and cruelty. When the boy’s Black friend Joseph is forced into sleeping rough and becomes dependent on the help of the other boys, the narrator rejects Janet’s requests to be allowed to visit him claiming his desire is to ‘protect’ her from the ‘squalor’. Yet at the same time he speculates, more than once, on whether she would like ‘to be degraded’, ‘bruised’ and ‘bitten’ by him. Tilokie is aware at the point that he decides to leave London for Guyana that he no longer wants a relationship with Maria, yet he still subjects her to the humiliation of abandonment in a foreign country thereby compelling her to experience the alienation in Guyana that he has been through in England. One is reminded here of Hazel Carby’s reflections on her parents’ marriage in *Imperial Intimacies*, where she states that their union was not ‘a process of magnetic
fusion but a violent repulsion’. Carby argues that the estrangement that marked their relationship was determined by outside forces: ‘the practices and prejudices of the British social order’.34 As the boy digests Janet’s claims that she cannot introduce him to her parents as they will never accept their relationship, there is a clear sense in which we feel the uneven nature of his interactions with her when contrasted with the honesty and frankness that define the boy’s relationships with his male South Asian friends and with Joseph. Janet’s desire to ‘observe’ Joseph and her decision not to challenge her parents’ prejudice mark her as complicit in the racism that the boy experiences.

Writing by Elly Niland and Lakshmi Persaud offer important reflections on how familial spaces of belonging are negotiated in the metropole. Moving away from the darker and seemingly impossible relationships formed by the protagonists of The Intended and Hendree’s Cure, Elly Niland’s 2021 essay ‘From B.G to G.B’ portrays a loving relationship that survives the colour bar of both Britain and Ireland during the Windrush era. As is typical of Niland’s work, she achieves this with great humour and her moving portrayal of her flight from Burnham’s Guyana to Tooting is dotted as frequently with comic moments as it is with sadness. What stands out in this short essay is the determination of Niland and her white, Irish spouse to create their own world free from the limitations of racism in London – where she is defined as a ‘coon bird’ and Ireland, where even her mother-in-law joins the derogatory racialized gossip about her. Her final paragraph is a victorious reflection on the couple’s achievement to build a world for their mixed-heritage children that defies others’ boundaries. This defiant assertion of identity and joyful occupation of space is typical of Niland’s work, which celebrates the moments of community to be found in London. In poems like ‘Tooting Market’, for example, which appears in Niland’s first collection of poetry In Retrospect, the speaker is offered comfort by the presence of traditional Guyanese food such as souse, pepper pot and black
pudding: The comfort of community in this space is clear: ‘Such liberation. Such collaboration. Such loud laughter./ People walking side by side./ Together.’35 What is also abundantly evident in Niland’s work is the idea that she lives, as a writer, in two languages. The Guyanese Creole of her childhood is recalled throughout her work but in poems like ‘My Creole Identity Card’, she shows the extent to which this language is a refuge to her as a migrant.36 However like the other writers explored here Niland does not write without reference to the psychological burden of achievement placed on the migrant. In the poem ‘Rama’s Rum Shop’ for example, the speaker recounts Rama’s lament, from Berbice, for the early death of his drug-addicted daughter in England: ‘Send me child away for a “better life”./ And what come back?’37

In Lakshmi Persaud’s novel Daughters of Empire there is also a nod to the combination of resistance and accommodation necessary for survival in the ‘mother country’. This process of survival is neatly summed up in the remembrance by Amira, the central character of Daughters of Empire, of her father’s words to her: ‘Take the hits but keep moving forward, my daughter, keep moving forward’.38 There is a continuous sense in Persaud’s novel that the Indian-Trinidadian community she has left behind is omnipresent in her new life in London. Amira constantly hears the critical voices of her family in her head, in particular it is the voice of her sister that weighs her down as she tries to negotiate the new rules of life in the mother country (Persaud 2012: 6).

Unlike the male authors we considered earlier however, it is the patriarchy that Amira must contend with too as her endeavours to advocate for herself and her three daughters are repeatedly interrupted by her imagined idea of her father’s or husband’s opinions. But Amira ultimately discards these to uplift her own voice, securing an education for her daughters and shielding them as best she can from the racism of the teachers and the local
community. As she etches the family into the North London landscape and makes moves towards exploring her own sexuality in the safe space of Madame Varekova’s shop, we are reminded of the defiance of Niland’s essay and its insistence on occupying a space that is taken rather than given. It is in a disturbing scene where Amira’s daughter Anjali is violently raped by her academic supervisor that the reader is propelled back to the colonial plantation, not just in the moment in which we learn that Dr Marshall’s brutality was formed by watching his father violate the workers on his coffee plantation in Kenya, but also in reference to the succour that Anjali seeks in Trinidad from Lili and Palli. It is in the moment where these Indian-Trinidadian women join forces to secure Anjali a safe abortion, while guarding her secret from the rest of the community, that we are reminded of the Jahajjin networks, documented by historians of indenture, who note how women worked together to mitigate the effects of colonial and patriarchal violence (Shameem 1998: 61).

Ultimately, what can be felt to define the literature of the Indian-Caribbean Windrush period is the presence or absence of community and the legacies of the plantations that encircled the first generations of indentured labourers. Whether it is Naipaul looking back to the metropolitan Indian-Trinidadian community of Miguel Street to write his first novel or Persaud recreating in the twentieth-first century, the sisterhoods that protected Indian women on plantations in the twentieth, these works are united by an awareness of the importance of representing distinctly Indian-Caribbean Windrush stories. Thus, the basement-dwelling speaker that pens Coolie Odyssey opens the volume with a backward glance to the Indian ‘Ma’ whose death in Guyana has prompted an awareness for the writer in London that the ancestors ‘lie like texts/waiting to be written by the children’. Importantly, what the texts say most powerfully is that what Empire signified for all Windrushers and how they experienced it was not the same. From the journey of a young man from a Berbician fishing village to the high achieving Trinidadian,
Oxford-bound, each story has its value and each tells a different version of what it was to experience the ‘other’ Windrush.

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NOTES


2. See for example Nicholas Boston, ‘Some of the most interesting Windrush passengers were Indo-Caribbean – yet their stories remain untold’ Independent, 21 June 2021 and Jane Raca ‘The other Windrush generation: Poles reunited after fleeing Soviet camps’ Guardian 22 June 2018. Nicholas Boston has additionally written articles about the LGBTQ+ presence in this migration. See for example: ‘Ivor Cummings was the ‘gay father of the Windrush generation’ – so why haven’t we heard of him? Independent 25 June 2019.

3. See the Migrations Museum’s ‘No Turning Back: Seven Migration Moments that Changed Britain’ (2017–2018), which featured a storyteller of Indian-Caribbean heritage (Maria del Pilar Kaladeen), whose father was also part of the Windrush Generation and the British Library’s Windrush Stories (https://www.bl.uk/windrush), which features pieces by Indian-Caribbean academics Professor Heidi Safia Mirza and Dr Maria del Pilar Kaladeen. The current exhibition at the Museum of London can be found at: https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands/whats-on/exhibitions(indo-caribbean


5. While beyond the scope of this article, the same case could be made for Chinese-Caribbean literature of the Windrush period and it is important to acknowledge writers like Meiling Jin and Jan Lowe Shinebourne, both Chinese-Guyanese, who were writing during this period.

6. See for example Elly Niland’s chapter in Maria del Pilar Kaladeen and David Dabydeen (eds) (2021) The Other Windrush (‘From B.G to G.B’, pp.36–45) where she documents this migration.

8. According to the writer David Dabydeen, a friend of Selvon’s, Moses, the lead character of *The Lonely Londoners*, was intended to be an Indian-Caribbean man but was interpreted by readers as African-Caribbean. David Dabydeen in conversation at the event *Indenture to Windrush: Invisible Passengers of Two Imperial Migrations* University of London, Senate House, 12 May 2017.


17. South Indians formed a small percentage of the total of Indians brought to the Caribbean during the period of indenture there (1838–1917) and were much discriminated against by both Indians from the north of the sub-continent and the British, who considered them less able plantations workers. The British generally only recruited from the South when they had no other option. See for example Nagamootoo 2000: 6.

18. Maria del Pilar Kaladeen, ‘Those not with us anymore: The Literary Archive of Indian Minorities in Guyanese Indenture and Beyond’ in *Journal of West Indian Literature* 29(1), April 2021.


20. Peter Kempadoo, himself a descendant of South Indian indentured labourers, stated that at one point almost all the fishing fleets in Guyana were owned by South Indian Guyanese due to this rejection of plantation labour. Kempadoo, Personal Interview, 2003.
24. See for example Helen Brown’s article in the Financial Times: https://ig.ft.com/life-of-a-song/london-is-the-place-for-me.html (accessed 12/10/23.)
26. See for example ‘Ma talking words’, p.40–41.
27. See for example the poem ‘Catching Crabs’ in Dabydeen, 1988:44.
31. The narrator and central character of *The Intended* is never named in the novel.
37. ‘Rama’s Rum Shop’ Niland 2005: 68.