



Before Windrush: Recovering an Asian and Black Literary Heritage within Britain

By Pallavi Rastogi and Jocelyn Fenton Stitt

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Before Windrush: Recovering an Asian and Black Literary Heritage within Britain is an important intervention in the growing field of Black British literary studies. Composed of essays on non-white writers living in, or writing about, Britain in the period before the post-WW II wave of immigration, the anthology testifies to the existence of a British nation that has been multiracial and multicultural for centuries. Through an analysis of well-known figures such as Mary Prince, Mary Seacole, C. L. R. James, and Mulk Raj Anand as well as forgotten writers such as Helena Wells, Lucy Peacock, Olive Christian Malvery, Bhagvat Singh Jee, T. B. Pandian, and Lao She among others, the essays in Before Windrush shed light on an understudied aspect of Britain: its racial and ethnic complexity during the colonial period. The authors discussed here, whose work originates in and borrows from Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist conventions, challenge the implicit whiteness of English writing by showing the literary legacy of the Asian and black presence in Britain. Before Windrush places this hidden literary history of Asian and black literature within the social and cultural contexts of its British production. Contributors include Julie Codell, Pallavi Rastogi, W. F. Santiago-Valles, Jocelyn Fenton Stitt, Michelle Taylor, Stoyan Tchaprazov, Margaret Trenta, and Anne Witchard.

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Editorial Review

Review

An eloquent and compelling reframing of the life and history of Black Britons before 1948, Before Windrush provides a rare yet essential overview of the Asian, South Asian, Caribbean and African writers engagements and contributions to both British and world history. Boasting an impressive survey of topics, ethnicities and eras, from reevaluations of canonical texts to intrepid, new analyses of largely overlooked writers and minority British communities, this volume brings lost conversations and undiscovered material back into British and postcolonial literary studies..... There is no better place to either start or further expand one's knowledge of Black British literature, culture and thought in all of its manifestations. --Michelle M. Wright, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Author, *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* Michelle M. Wright

Before Windrush breaks significantly new ground in the focus it gives to Asian writers in multicultural British literature before 1948. Placing these voices into constructive relationships and conversations with Afro-Caribbean literary figures verifies their indivisibility from an often exclusionary canon. The writing is lucid and concise, the critical lenses sharp and revealing. This anthology fills a long neglected space in our scholarship and teaching. --Keith Sandiford, Louisiana State University, Author, *Measuring the Moment: Strategies of Protest in Eighteenth-Century Afro-English Writing* --Keith Sandiford

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About the Author

Pallavi Rastogi is assistant professor of English at Louisiana State University where she teaches courses on colonial and post-colonial literatures. Her book on Indian diaspora writing in South Africa is forthcoming from Ohio State University Press. She has also published essays in various journals and anthologies on South Asians in Britain, South Africa, and the United States. Jocelyn Fenton Stitt is assistant professor of Women's Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Her research on the connections between nineteenth-century discourses and feminist issues in the contemporary Caribbean has been published in *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* and *ARIEL*. Stitt teaches courses on global feminism, the African diaspora, and feminist mothering.

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