



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

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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