★ INTRODUCTION

[Edouard] Glissant said to me: "I have never met you in Barbados, and you have never met me in Martinique. Why?" And I replied, "Because those journeys were not on our agenda."
—George Lamming (*Conversations*)

This book is a strange beast. It straddles the imaginative geography of three vast regions—South Asia, Africa, the Americas—but is not ethnography, travelogue, or sociology. The attempt has been to bring together questions relevant, however differently, to two specific contexts: Trinidad and India. The hope is that, while the comparisons might produce new shadows, new regions will simultaneously be cast into relief.

The central focus of the book is the "woman question" as it emerges through the mobilization of "Indianness" and other re-

lated notions of region, ethnic group, or race and the intertwining of gender issues with the formation and assertion of different kinds of identities in Trinidad and India. What might it mean to intellectually traverse these spaces, and what might it mean to ask questions that have some resonance in each of them? One of the main tasks of this research project has been to conceptualize frameworks in which comparative discussions across the South can be undertaken.

Key critical terms in relation to the cultural turn in the social sciences have included, among others, "colonialism," "nation," "modernity," "citizenship," "identity," and "subjectivity." Such terms are often explicated in the bounded context of nation-states in the South or with reference to Western European societies. Indeed, an important feature of twentieth-century scholarship could well be the nation-centrism of the analyses of intellectual formations of the period. My project proceeds on the assumption that South–South comparative work problematizes the standard use of these terms and adds new dimensions to their usage even in specific national contexts.

The project draws on materials obtained from Southern libraries and archives located in the Caribbean, South Africa, and India. The fieldwork and interviews on which the book draws were conducted from 1994 to 2004. A series of fortuitous fellowships allowed me, a scholar living and working in India, to make periodic research visits to Trinidad. Without this kind of admittedly rare assistance, a researcher living in the Third World is unlikely to be able to carry out research in other Southern societies, since most available grants are for visiting First World universities. The presumption, to put it baldly, is that people in the global South do not have much to learn from each other, while they have everything to gain from going to Cambridge or Princeton. But having crossed the innumerable hurdles posed by consular authorities suspicious of anyone from a "poor" country like India trying to visit another where the economic opportunities are allegedly better, once having actually entered other Southern spaces, it is not as though the Third World scholar finds easy admittance into their institutions or their communities, carrying as she or he does the burden of ethnic origin (in my case, Indian), a burden that is as likely to provide one with unwanted allies as to confront one with unexpected hostility in the fraught racial situations in Trinidad, for example.[1]

My work, however, is haunted by the figure of the traveler as well as of the ethnographer. As the Trinidadian calypsonian Mighty Dougla (Cletus Ali)

put it in a different context, "I am neither one nor the other/Six of one, half a dozen of the other," the scholar living in the South who cannot afford the leisure and expense of tourism or anthropology. This has contributed, for instance, to my peculiar relationship to Trinidad, which combines familiarity and opacity at the same time and mixes seeming recognition with utter incomprehension. Annual visits over several years puts one in a position where the streets and shops, the maxi-cab rides and the shortcuts, acquire an eerie intimacy; they provide the illusion of "knowing" where one is. But the geographical familiarity does not substitute for the constant stumbling in conversation, the mutual lack of intelligibility in a host of social situations.

How do I conceptualize my relationship to a place that has become an intimate part of my subjective past while remaining, at the same time, outside any assertion of my cultural authority? Where Trinidad is concerned, the nature of my research there as well as the rejection of a particular subject position—that of the anthropologist—does not allow me the privilege of deploying an "ethnographic authority." My writing about India, by contrast, manifests a confidence, a cultural authority (as distinct from that produced by the ethnographer's gaze) brought to bear on the intricacies of contemporary political-cultural maneuvers. In writing about Trinidad, I often find myself caught between the disavowal of ethnographic authority and the impossibility of claiming cultural authority. My difficult task in this book, then, has been to address as substantially as possible the ambiguity of my position as a scholar from and in India face to face with other "Indians" whose histories and futures may have little relation to my own but whose claim to India and Indianness may well change the way in which Indians in India understand questions of cultural identity.

A word about the book's structure of address: I have often been asked whether this is a book "about Trinidad," and if it is, whether it was written for readers in South Asia or for Caribbeanists. For reasons that have to do with the location of the researcher and the concerns coming out of that history, I cannot claim that I am writing for a universal readership or for a specialist, Caribbean-focused audience. I do have in mind fellow South Asians when I frame the questions that animate the book: questions about nationalism, the colonial past, cultural identity in the former colonies. Hence, the position from which I speak is obviously not an unmarked one. My attempt is to render strange an all too familiar set of preoccupations—about nationalism, Hindus and Muslims, caste and culture, femininity and the public

sphere—by locating them in a geographically distant place where they have taken on altogether different significations even while they continue to call themselves "Indian." One can only hope that the strategy of entering the debate at a tangent will yield insights not only for those interested, and invested, in either South Asia or the Caribbean, but also for anyone engaging with contemporary postcolonial situations.

To sketch quickly the immediate historical-political context of the contemporary critique of "nation" in the case of India, one might recall that for radical politics in the 1970s and '80s, especially those of the Marxist-Leninist groups and the women's movement, the nation-state was a significant addressee. While the critique of the nation was central to radical politics, it was in many ways still part of the political and cultural logic of the national-modern. The secularism and modernity of the politics depended, as we can now see, on the disavowal of caste, community, ethnicity, and regional and linguistic difference. Indeed, the energy and reach of feminism or the Marxist-Leninist movement seemed to be made possible by these very disavowals. In the 1990s, however, political events such as the anti-Mandal (anti-affirmative action) agitation,[2] the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the formation of successful "regional" parties, and so on, combined with the drive to privatize and liberalize the Indian economy, disrupted the narratives of the national-modern, a disruption within which the work of many critical scholars is situated today. For someone like me, affiliated with the critique of the languages of dominance in her society, a rethinking—and redeployment in a different context—of the concept of "Third World" may suggest yet another entry point into the problematization of the universal-modern. My own stakes in this redeployment will be discussed in what follows.

I shall begin by glancing at my own profession, teaching, and my own former discipline, English studies, which for some time has been subjected to various strands of political questioning. Looking back on what has come to be called the critique of English studies in India, we have come to recognize certain impasses—in particular, around the problem of relevance. The post-Independence generation of English teachers (R. B. Patankar, Ayyappa Panikkar, and U. R. Ananthamurthy, to name just a few figures who were teaching in the 1970s) seemed to resolve the question of the relevance of its profession by doing business as usual in the classroom, teaching English literature but engaging actively in the intellectual life of the community in Marathi, Malayalam, and Kannada, respectively. By the 1980s, however, a few teachers—in Hyderabad, Delhi, and Calcutta, for example—were beginning to raise different sorts of questions in the English classroom, largely due to their involvement in feminism. And by the 1990s, the sharpening of conflicts around issues of nation, community, and caste, as well as gender, appeared to bring the dissatisfaction and unease of both students and teachers more directly into the classroom, leading to a sustained questioning of received curricula, pedagogical practices, and research emphases.

Putting it somewhat schematically, we might say that two kinds of work have begun to receive increased attention within English departments: (1) research that seeks to examine Indian languages, literatures, and cultural practices, to investigate different kinds of writing (such as writing by women or *dalits*, a political identity claimed by former untouchables and other lower castes), or to enlarge the discipline by studying hitherto devalued cultural forms such as popular cinema or children's literature; and (2) research into "commonwealth" or even Third World cultures and literatures. Although the first kind of agenda does seem to require major reorientations in terms of methodologies and politics, the Indian student or teacher is, when all is said and done, not particularly handicapped in the study of what is in some sense "ours." (Given the burden of nationalism—clearly visible in their curricula—that the post-Independence social sciences carry in India, and given the necessarily belated relay of this burden to English studies, the most predictable response I used to get when I said I taught Caribbean and African texts is, "But why not Indian texts?") The second sort of agenda, that of teaching "Third World literature," is handicapped from the start. Scarce institutional resources can barely be stretched to acquire conventional materials required by the discipline, let alone diverted to the purchase of little-known texts from non-metropolitan places. The teacher's woes are magnified in those of the researcher, whose access to primary and secondary material is severely limited. Since both teaching and research in the area continue in spite of these problems, I would like to argue here for a reexamination of the implicit premises with which we in India set out to teach and study other Third World contexts and suggest that the times call for a critical fashioning of new research agendas that might rethink the assumptions, even as they emphasize the importance, of comparative work.

Indians, Indians Everywhere

One of the signs of our times is the spectacular international visibility of the "Indian"—from beauty queens to software professionals, technologists, scientists, artists, economists, filmmakers, historians, and literary theorists. As a self-congratulatory cultural nationalism overcomes us, we seldom stop to think about the formation of this "Indian" and his or her deployment by the political economy of global capitalism—an economy that, we do not need to emphasize, is also an economy of academe and the production of knowledge. At mid-century, in the age of Nehruvian socialism and the Nonaligned Movement, and in the aftermath of the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle, Indians claimed solidarity with other formerly colonized peoples and extended support of various kinds to nations less privileged than we were. At the end of the millennium, however, the Indian is not simply another postcolonial but one who would claim to have attained exceptionality or special status, an achievement that increasingly sets him off from inhabitants of other post-colonies. Earlier axes of identification are transformed and old solidarities disavowed as the middle-class Indian, even as she vociferously asserts her cultural difference, becomes a crucial relay in the circuits of multinational capital. Although a good deal of recent critical scholarship has focused on the formation of the Indian citizen-subject and analyzed the exclusions (of caste, community, and gender, for instance) that underwrite it, the subtle changes occurring in the composition of the "Indian" in transnational spaces have yet to be seriously investigated.

I mention this as one of the concerns arising from my visits to the Caribbean, where I encountered in Jamaica and Trinidad a variety of perceptions regarding Indians—perceptions that often were actively fostered, especially by newly immigrant Indian groups; international organizations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (part of the right-wing Sangh Parivar "family" that includes the Bharatiya Janata Party); and even the Indian nation-state through its overseas High Commissions. Safe in an Indian university, one can simply read the West Indian text as one among other literary artifacts, but the Indian researcher traveling in the Caribbean or in Africa might well be called on to make explicit her motivations for undertaking comparative research. This demand may be related to the deployment of the notion of "culture" by Indians from India as well as people of Indian origin in the West Indies, their invocation of an ancient past and a glorious civilization as proof of racial superiority. As a Guyanese friend put it, "Indians always

say culture is what they have and the black people don't." The situation is further complicated when we have Indians from India studying "East Indian West Indians." The cultural forms of these diasporic communities are often imaged by Indians as fragmented, deficient, or derivative. As I discuss in chapter 1, "The Indian in Me," there is a complex politics to the invocation of Indianness in the Caribbean, the details of which often elude the visiting Indian researcher, partly because of his or her own unexamined notions of what "Indian culture" means.

Teaching the Caribbean

Another profound disorientation I experienced in the Caribbean was that of being in a west that was not the West. Earlier visits outside India had always been to First World spaces, and however different each might have been from the other, they were, for me, collectively that which was not Indian, not Third World. The encounter with the Caribbean forced me to begin asking questions about sameness and difference, whether in the realm of the political (with regard to notions of nation and region), the economic (questions of "dependency" and "development"), or the cultural (the tradition-versus-modernity debate), that were different from those I was accustomed to asking—for example, in relation to India and the West. Moreover, the encounter had a crucial impact on the questions I addressed in the classroom, the teaching strategies I adopted, and the texts that I taught.[3]

Some years ago, I wrote a paper, based on a course I had taught in 1989 on Africa and the Caribbean, in which I attempted to explore the implications of teaching non-Western literary texts in Indian Departments of English.[4] For me as well as my students, it had been a first-time exposure to these texts, contexts, and histories. Given the dearth of material in our largely Eurocentric libraries, the task of teaching the course was a difficult one, and the engagement with the texts had to be carefully negotiated and renegotiated at every step.

Clearly, our concern was not just one about "content," using new texts in place of the old. I had suggested in the paper that this kind of easy substitution does not question the need for a canon of great texts, a need that brings with it the imperative to teach the canon in particular ways. My argument was that the demand to be included or accommodated within the existing paradigm did not pose a threat to the paradigm itself, "since it never questions the criteria which determine exclusion in the first place."[5] Instead, I

had proposed that we examine how we teach and read and analyze the expectations we bring to our reading of African and Caribbean texts. I had emphasized the importance of teaching nonmetropolitan texts while, at the same time, resisting "their incorporation into the canon" by not employing "customary ways of reading."[6]

My contention then was that the nonmetropolitan texts posed a radical challenge to the discipline and to conventional literary critical approaches, not because of any intrinsic quality they possessed, but because—embedded as they were in histories similar in some ways to ours in India—our questions or interests coincided, or came into a conjuncture, with these Caribbean and African works. The risk, of course, was that in stressing similarities we might ignore real differences between specific societies in the South. All the same, our engagement with these texts "forced our attention away from the aesthetic to the political dimension, . . . making us seek assonance and dissonance not in poetic form but in the realm of culture, politics and history."[7] What we managed to accomplish to a certain extent was "to place the text more firmly amidst material and social practices instead of in a purely literary tradition."[8]

Looking back at these concerns, it seems to me that the emphasis was still on the literary text, with not enough attention being paid either to the discursive networks from which it had emerged or to other kinds of cultural artifacts. Perhaps this was a problem, simply, of inadequate information. Perhaps it was also the formulation of the question itself—as one of text plus context—that was coming in the way, for in this formulation the text ultimately can be detached from the context, which is imaged as simply surrounding it. The question of how to decide the demarcations of a text's boundaries (or of what constituted a "text" in the first place) was not addressed, except in passing. Consequently, one ended up displaying as texts in the classroom precisely those sorts of pieces—a Walcott play, an early Brathwaite poem, a Lamming novel—that the discipline of English studies would have no difficulty accepting, omitting entirely, for example, the popular music of the Caribbean, an understanding of which is so central to any attempt to study West Indian cultural politics.[9]

It seems to me now that the problem was related to our Third Worldist attempt to discover cultural artifacts of "our own," which were, to use Kwame Anthony Appiah's words, deserving of dignity. In addition, concepts like the "political" and the "aesthetic" appear in hindsight to have been invoked as though their meanings were "given," and the distinction between them

was too quickly posed, although at the time the terms did perhaps serve as a kind of shorthand for entire methodologies. In 1990, the need for disciplinary transformation was certainly being expressed in different quarters, but for me, at least, the larger significance of this proposed transformation was as yet not adequately thought through. It was only after the dramatic national events of late 1990 (I refer in particular to the anti-Mandal agitation of upper-caste youth seeking to deny job reservations for the lower castes) that the question of what it meant to challenge "English" in India could be asked in a different register and the whole terrain on which the dominant "aesthetic" was constructed could be investigated from a different critical perspective. "Mandal" as an event drew the attention of many middle-class, left-oriented secular Indians to the "invisibilizing" of caste in the composition of the citizen-subject. In literary studies, dominated by a modernism congruent in many ways with the secularism of the post-Independence era, it became possible, sometimes by consolidating earlier dalit and feminist initiatives, to directly confront the exclusions that helped create the realm of the aesthetic. Investigating the historical formation of the aesthetic realm, it seems to me, can have important implications for comparative Third World cultural studies in terms of what we set out to compare and how we go about our task.

Although the literary or cultural comparativist often has no formal training in the discipline of anthropology, its modes of argument and its habits of thought are bound to infect any enterprise like the comparativist's, which purports to study cultural formations other than the one inhabited by the investigator. Predictably, the question of anthropology would never come up when Indian students, for example, study British or American literature.[10] The frameworks and locations that endorse the production of "modern" knowledge ensure that the question only applies to the study of non-Western, or "Southern," cultures.[11] Since the project of classical anthropology is to produce a self-understanding of the West through a study of "other" cultures, the anthropological investigator tends to assume the centrality of Western civilization. Given this location provided by the discipline for the investigator, how can the Third World "anthropologist" begin to question this centrality?

When such an anthropologist—and clearly I use this description to name a set of subject positions, no matter what the disciplinary training of the investigator—ventures into another Third World space, the normalization of her or his location, and thereby his or her subject position, is opened to

questioning, and the possibility for a critique of the dominant episteme, I would argue, begins to emerge. For the Third World intellectual—in particular, for the Indian intellectual, often by definition upper-class and upper-caste—such a critique would necessarily involve an unlearning of her privilege, which is different from the unlearning that takes place in a "national" context, as well as a recognition of her complicity with the institutions and disciplinary frameworks of metropolitan knowledge production.

By now, of course, it is fairly well established that the modern academic disciplines, including anthropology, were born simultaneously with a new phase in European expansion, underwriting as well as underwritten by the project of colonial governance.[12] Whether scholars in the colonial period helped produce stereotypes about the colonized or detailed information about customs and practices, in either case they were constructing a world variously described as non-modern, traditional or primitive, a world thereby rendered amenable to domination by a more "advanced" civilization. It is the scholar's professed expertise (what James Clifford has so aptly called "ethnographic authority"), certified by metropolitan academic institutions, that continues to endorse the "truth" and factuality of this knowledge.[13]

The ethnographer functions like a translator. Indeed, the project of anthropology has been seen as that of translating one culture into terms intelligible to another.[14] What has also come to be addressed within the discipline, in a way that is instructive for scholars in any field, is the question of how relations of power, such as those under colonial or neocolonial domination, determine the direction and nature of translation, often simplifying, as Talal Asad has pointed out, toward the stronger language or culture.[15] This also raises once again the question of audience and of the ethnographer's subject position. What might be the possible differences between metropolitan and Third World representations of Third World contexts?

Bases of Comparative Research

Hitherto, the often undeclared bases of comparative study have been a humanism and a universalism that presumed a common human nature: In spite of their superficial differences, all people in the world were thought ultimately to be the same or in the process of becoming like one another. This was, however, an argument made from above, as it were. The "liberal" Western ethnographer, for instance, could claim the common humanity

of investigator and objects of study, even if it was, on the part of these "objects," a humanity that was to be uncovered through the labor of the ethnographer's translation of their words and deeds into his or her Euro-American language. What could then be compared was the non-Western context with the anthropologist's Western one. Implicit in this kind of comparison, despite the protestations of commonality, is what Achille Mbembe, writing about the African context, has called "the perspective of a failed universality":

> The common unit, the ultimate foundation, even the intrinsic finality of the comparative project is Western modernity, understood either as the standard against which one measures other societies, or as the final destination toward which they are to move. And each time "African" is introduced into the operation, the comparative act is reduced to an arithmetic relation of "superiority" and "inferiority." Hierarchical figures slip in between these three chimeras of similitude, resemblance, and similarity, establishing orders of value defined in an arbitrary manner, the function of which is to legitimate discrimination and, too often, violence.[16] (my emphasis)

As I have argued in my work on the politics of translation, the very premise of a universal history on which, in comparative study, the unity of human consciousness is predicated allows, as for example in the Hegelian model of world history, the formation of an inner hierarchy that situates Third World cultures below the Euro-American.[17]

So even when Third World intellectuals themselves undertake comparative work, their task becomes one of comparing their cultural products with metropolitan ones: Kalidasa becomes the Shakespeare of India; Tutuola becomes the African Fielding. This is part of the urge to find something in our colonized cultures that, as Appiah puts it, "lives up to" the label (whether it is that of philosophy or literature), to find something that is ours that "deserves the dignity."[18] The fact, says Appiah, taking the case of Africa, is that "intellectuals educated in the shadow of the West" are bound "to adopt an essentially comparative perspective."[19] The inherent asymmetry of the comparativist project framed in these terms would be, or so it seems to me, at least displaced (since it cannot simply be done away with) when two different Third World contexts are being compared or studied together by one whose subject positions and location are in the Third World.

Outside Metropolitan Circuits?

Although it is now acknowledged that the space from which one is speaking—its histories, its questions—crucially configure the perspective of the investigator, the implications of such a configuration for comparative research in the Third World have not yet been mapped out. If ethnographic work, always comparativist by definition, has hitherto been embedded both literally and figuratively in structures of dominance, we might speculate as to what might happen when the founding impulse is no longer one of greater and more efficient control. If one is not representing, or producing, knowledge to govern and regulate, what could be the alternative impulses?

If one of those impulses is the conscious formulation of the political project of dismantling Eurocentrism, where would one look for resources (besides, of course, in one's own local context, which for various reasons may not be adequate) but in other Third World spaces? The project cannot be an isolated one, located only in a single post-colony. While I would certainly not want to deny that colonial and postcolonial trajectories of various regions have been different from each other, arguments for exceptionality in the contemporary context can only weaken the possibilities for the emergence of urgently needed new solidarities. The silence about our common histories mirrors the silence about the possibility of a shared future. There is perhaps, then, some purchase to be gained by positing shared histories at a certain level, since the colonies as well as the disciplinary networks in which they are produced and held have been part of the global enterprise of colonialism and neocolonialism. What the "gain" might be only the outcome of comparative projects may be able to suggest. Only by risking the formulation of problems in which more than one nationality has similar stakes can we push for a reconfiguration of our research agendas.

Just as work on culture in India needs to take into consideration Orientalist structures of representation,[20] one should undertake similar ground-clearing tasks for other Third World contexts with which one is attempting to engage. As I discovered during my sojourn in the West Indies, my awareness of the ways in which "India" had been produced—in colonialist discourse, for example—did not provide a guarantee that I could perceive related structures of representation in regard to the Caribbean. Third World intellectuals who are beginning to think about Third World spaces other than their own need to address the question of how these different regions have been discursively constructed as objects of knowledge, to ex-

amine closely the technologies and theories that have enabled their emergence, and to understand the extent to which our readings of each other in the present is informed by those discursive grids.[21]

Alternative Frames

If the disciplines have so far been caught up in these paradigms of domination, what kind of representations of the Third World might be produced when this agenda is disrupted? What happens, we may ask, when a West Indian reads the Nigerian Chinua Achebe? When a South Asian reads the West Indian Kamau Brathwaite? When Lucky Dube in South Africa sings Jamaican-style reggae? What will be the significance of these new representations? What sorts of cultural transformations do they signal? Would they function differently from metropolitan cultural products in Third World circuits? What new critical spaces might they help open up in the new locations where they begin to circulate?

More questions: Why should we speak to each other across the South? Why should we engage in comparative research across Third World locations? Perhaps the "ends" of the new comparative work are oblique. At best, this kind of work will contribute to the development of *alternative frames of reference*, so that Western modernity is no longer seen as the sole point of legitimization or comparison. Let me emphasize that my intention is not to suggest that we can eliminate First World knowledge structures or produce subjectivities that are entirely unmediated by the "West." My argument is simply that the "norming" of the comparative axis needs to be questioned. In much of our critical work, as well as our popular cultural conceptions, the two poles that make themselves manifest are "India" and "the West." To recognize that there exist outside our everyday sphere geographical and political spaces other than the West, spaces that have always intersected with our history but by the very logic of colonialism cannot be acknowledged in their mutual imbrication with our past, is a first step toward rewriting our histories as well as envisioning, and enlarging, our futures—together and anew.[22]

Critical engagements with other Third World spaces might help inaugurate for and in the South a new internationalism, different—in its motivations, its desires, its imagined futures—from the aggressive globalization set in motion by the First World. Woven into this chapter is an argument about perspective and intellectual and political location. In the Third World,

how do we read one another so that we do not appear simply as footnotes to Western history?[23] How do we learn to question the epistemological structures through which knowledges about Third World peoples are produced? I quote here the West Indian scholar and activist Walter Rodney:

> When an African abuses an Indian he repeats all that the white men said about Indian indentured "coolies"; and in turn the Indian has borrowed from the whites the stereotype of the "lazy nigger" ' to apply to the African beside him. It is as though no black man can see another black man except by looking through a white person. It is time we started seeing through our own eyes.[24]

What kind of critical awareness ought we to bring to our teaching and writing so we avoid reproducing the stereotypes about black/brown/yellow people that exist in what V. Y. Mudimbe calls the "colonial library"?[25] How do we learn to ask questions that resonate with the actual concerns of people in other Third World places? What sort of library or archive do we need to construct? What new kinds of literacy do we need to acquire? How can we learn to overcome our multiple amnesias?

I have expressed some anxiety about the emergence of the new cosmopolitan Indian who might actively seek identification with the First World rather than the Third World. I have also tried to suggest why this identification might be problematic by focusing on the common problems faced by comparativists in the South, pointing implicitly to the dangers of Indian researchers' replicating in relation to other Third World contexts the very maneuvers and representational modes that had negated and de-historicized their own spaces. In so doing, my intention was not to argue for a simple return to the international politics of the Nehru era but to urge a rethinking of present possibilities by pointing to forms of solidarity obscured by the growth of the globalized economy.

With the new globalization, the paths to the First World will be defined more clearly than ever before, rendered easier to traverse. Other locations on the map will appear all the more blurred, all the more difficult to reach. Now more than ever a critical perspective on our contemporary political-cultural identities requires that we place those other journeys on our agenda.

My own journey to the Caribbean also took me out of literature and into popular music as I struggled to understand the kinds of spaces in which cultural practice acquired significance. The book begins with this intro-

duction, which explores some of the larger theoretical issues confronting the project, and makes a case for comparative studies involving more than one Southern location. Chapter 1, "The Indian in Me," reflects on the situation of the researcher from India who wants to study the cultural politics of Indian diasporic communities, focusing specifically on what the novelist Samuel Selvon called the "East Indian Trinidadian Westindian." This chapter thus introduces the chief protagonists of the book, "Indians" in the Caribbean. Chapter 2, "Left to the Imagination," discusses the nationalist campaign against indentureship in India—a campaign in which the question of the indentured woman's sexuality occupied a crucial place—against the background of labor migration to Trinidad and other locations in the colonies. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with Trinidad's most central cultural form: popular music. "Take a Little Chutney, Add a Little Kaiso" (chapter 3) explores the phenomenon of "Indian soca" and discusses the 1990s controversy over this new musical genre while tracing the histories of performance and musical traditions that feed into it. "Jumping out of Time" (chapter 4) analyses the Afro-Trinidadian calypso's constructions of East Indian men and women over the best part of the twentieth century, relating those constructions to the larger politics of culture in Trinidad. Chapters 3–5 are accompanied by selections from songs available on the website http://mobilizing-india.cscsarchive.org. It is recommended that the reader listen to the chutney-soca songs and the calypsos while going through these chapters. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the musical public sphere in Trinidad in the light of the interventions made possible by Hindi film music from India. The afterword discusses the new directions taken by my research project into the realm of musical practice.