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Since the 1970s, there has been a steady increase in the study of indentured Indians across the globe from scholars who have an ancestral connection to indenture. The latter is a labor contract system implemented by Western European nations to supplant the loss of slave labor in the middle of the nineteenth century. The studies on indenture can be grouped into two categories: pioneering and emerging. The late Brij Lal tried cleverly to capture both categories in his edited book by casting his net wide to attract contributors.

The book is divided according to the following regions: the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Indian Oceans and South Africa, with most contributions from the latter region. A foreword is written by Shahid Amin, a former Professor of History at the University of Delhi. The book is well-organized with each chapter flowing seamlessly into the other. The themes and sub-themes in each chapter

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are attractive, providing readers with much-appreciated clarity.

Lal informs us impressively that the book 'is not about the making of history and historiography, but rather about the making of the historian, of the influences that have shaped their approach to scholarship, the broader intellectual impulses – social history, gender studies, oral narratives, creative non-fiction which underpin it – of the faces of people behind the professional mask' [p.6]. The aforesaid focus is welcomed.

From the Caribbean region, Brinsley Samaroo declared that he never wrote about himself and found it difficult to do so. He nonetheless presented an interesting account of his educational upbringing and how he had contributed to Indo-Caribbean indentured scholarship. 'Up to the seventies, very little research had been done despite the arrival of half a million Girmitiyas (indentured Indians) to the British, French, and Dutch Caribbean' (p.29). Lomarsh Roopnarine shared how he was able to move away from his insular plantation zone and eventually become a professor. He said his future 'will be guided by one simple but captivating fact. I have always enjoyed researching and writing and attending conferences on the Indian experience' with happy sentiments (p.57). Ruben Gowricharn wrote about how he became an established sociologist. 'Despite all types of influences on my personal development, the roots of most topics I dealt with in my professional development can be traced back to my childhood in Suriname' (p.81). Indeed, and as discussed in his chapter, he has made an enormous contribution to the study of ethnicity and politics in Suriname. Clem Seecharan expressed gloriously the impact of cricket on his life, the community of Port Mourant in Guyana, and internationally honing in on the gifted Rohan Kanhai, and others. This achievement was possible because the sugar industry did not focus mainly on the production of sugar and profits. Seecharan is convinced that wide-ranging reforms in the sugar industry led to 'well-run community centers with excellent cricket grounds and coaches' and a 'cricket culture at Port Mourant' (p.275).

From the Pacific Ocean region, Brij Lal shared a personal journey of how he was able to branch out of the plantation domain and become a professional person. While his journey was challenging and complimentary, no other event affected him so much as his banishment from his home island of Fiji. With stifling sadness, he wrote that he was banned for life for opposing 'the culture of military coups in my native country' (p. 110). However, Lal found solace in that he did not 'regret the impending end of [his] journey' and instead rejoiced that it happened at all (p.111).

From the Indian Ocean region, Celine Ramsamy-Giancone was not shy to declare that she felt like a foreigner studying the history of her island of La Union because the history of her people was marginally taught and discussed in the schools. All this changed, however, as she traveled beyond her island and

engaged in researching and writing about the Indians of her island. Her research findings led her to think that the religious practices of the indentured Indians had 'been strongly established' on her island (p.131). In the end, she espoused, 'I would conclude by saying that my research findings showcase the complex nature of religious questions and paint a motley, dappled and contrasting picture of the customs of Indians during the indentured-labor period' that brought her a 'step closer to the truth' (p.134).

From South Africa, the authors grew up in the apartheid era and hence their writings were shaped by that terrible experience. Yet, each author showed some unique individual experiences. Uma Dupelia-Mesthrie, a great-granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, provided an interesting story of how she had become an accidental historian. She nevertheless declared that many 'bodies came on my life's path and allowed me to blossom despite my own differences' (p.159). Goolam Vahed informs us that he had to navigate the 'tightening noose of apartheid' on him to be preoccupied with the history of Indians in South Africa. In the end, he noted that despite many challenges, 'we need to keep making history even if the circumstances are not of our own choosing because to do so is to exercise our agency over what is to come' (p. 192). Kalpana Hiralal demonstrates through her Indian family and educational pursuits how she grew from a shy girl to a confident woman. She spoke about how she continued to challenge the masculine narrative in South Africa in the realm of resistance. She is convinced that in 'shifting women's narratives from the margins to the centre' she sought, 'to give a voice, history to the ordinary women' (p.221). Rajend Mesthrie elaborated that despite his early deprived and segregated experience he was lucky to be exposed to many languages, authors, and ethnic groups, at home and abroad, which moulded him into a fantastic English teacher. Impressively, he was the 'first person of colour to be "president" of the Linguistics Society' of South Africa in 2001. The final chapter by Ashwin Desai, in a journalistic and literary style, and despite his experience of 'being an insider and outsider' in the history of South Africa, expresses that he felt comfort in that his 'generation had front-row seats to one of the great human dramas of the twentieth century', the collapse of apartheid (p.308).

Although contributions from Mauritius, French, and Danish regions are missing, and perhaps a second edited volume is needed to address aforesaid regions, the book is strong in many areas. The chapters reveal a personal journey of each author's life, essentially from the plantation yards to universities and eventual 'success' amid enormous challenges, discrimination, sacrifice, and tantalizing narratives that would bring tears to the most stoic minds. Yet, in all of the chapters, it is not difficult to notice the respective author's connection to his/her roots is not erased. The authors wrote from the heart and never forgot where they came from.