

REMEMBRANCES, REJECTIONS AND REPRESENTATION IN INDO-CARIBBEAN FICTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the complex dynamics of remembering and forgetting in Indo-Trinidadian diasporic literature through an analysis of Peggy Mohan's *Jahajin* (2008) and Lakshmi Persaud's *Daughters of Empire* (2012). Challenging V.S. Naipaul's assertion that Indo-Caribbean communities suffer from cultural amnesia, this study argues that forgetting functions as an intentional survival strategy within traumatic diasporic contexts. Through the lens of George Lipsitz's concept of "counter-memory," the analysis reveals how both novels present memory and forgetting as active negotiations rather than passive losses. *Jahajin* explores the deliberate abandonment of Bhojpuri language by indentured laborers seeking upward mobility for their descendants, while *Daughters of Empire* examines the struggles of "third migrants" who depend on remembering to maintain cultural identity in London. Both texts demonstrate how Indo-Trinidadian women exercise agency in determining what aspects of their heritage to preserve, discard, or transform, positioning diasporic subjects not as helpless victims of cultural erosion but as strategic agents who reconstruct the past to serve present survival needs.

Keywords: *Diasporic Memory, Indo-Trinidadian Literature, Counter-Memory, Cultural Forgetting, Indentureship, Bhojpuri Language.*

V.S. Naipaul, at the first conference on East Indians in the Caribbean held at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus in 1975, noted: "There is an ignorance of the Indian community not only from without, but also from within. Indians here know little of the many things that have made them. But we mustn't only blame; we must also examine. I think we have to consider the culture from which we have come... We forget; we have no idea of our past; it is part of the

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