

Firstly, thank you so much for sharing Queer Coolie-tudes with us. I have linked the interview with Amar Wahab and as you have covered so much with him I'm going to focus on just a few questions more specific to this film being shown in a British context.

Could you elaborate on the film title's meaning and its aesthetics and how they relate to the experiences highlighted?

K. Torabully's term of coolitude differs from my use of Queer Coolie-tudes. I am interested in queering the term coolie and creating a decolonial diasporic aesthetic to visualize multivocal Creole-ness as queer ethnography steeped in Caribbean and diasporic histories and experientials. I created the term queer coolie-tudes with the E, which I define in the film as an inflection. As a state of existence, Queer Coolie-tudes is an oblique politics and poetics of being queer and coolie, acknowledging diasporic histories of indentureship and complicated in-between hybrid Creole identities embodied as queer diasporic coolies with roots and stances of the Caribbean, while being fluid bodies living in Canada. It's a theory that I created in the making of this film. A theorist who was influential in my research-creation of Queer Coolie-tudes was Édouard Glissant's philosophy of opacity, which was something I visualized at the start of the film and visually explored throughout this film because I don't think that queer bodies of colour are easily understood in our contexts and conditions. I represented opacity at the very beginning of the film in a fluid shot of an undefinable object underwater, which although visible, is not easily understood or defined as 'legible'. My theoretical mapping of the film's title implies a nuanced state of existence, which is fluidly intertwined with Édouard Glissant's poetics of opacity, which

infers a state of otherness that rejects being visible under preconceived universal models that delimits nuanced understanding of the subjects impacted by colonialism, as being human. I reference Glissant's use of opacity as a decolonial signalling of visibility on one's terms.

Queer Coolie-tudes, as a film, traces an intergenerational queer ethnography, which is a living archive of the queer coolie, of the Douglamixture of Indian and Black, and queer Creole Chinese (callaloo identity) in Trinidad. I also wanted to explore genderqueer identity and performances of drag-gendered identity alongside age and the disabled body. I tried to visually suture many cultures and mixtures in this film – racial, cultural mixtures, gendered and genderqueer in an intergenerational representation of the subjects. The youngest subject was 21, the oldest was 65 to 67; there was truly a range of queer conditions and bodies visualized in the film.

Folks with legacies of indentured servitude aren't as visible here in the British Caribbean community. Considering the history of the British involvement in the legacy of these identities, would you like to expand on what you feel we need to build awareness on here in Britain?

Since I do not live in a British or UK context, it is difficult to respond to this question, however, similar to Canada, I imagine that the Indo-Caribbean experience might either be subsumed under a "South Asian" moniker or perhaps as a diasporic categorising identification as opposed to a Caribbean mode of identification, as Indo-Caribbean. The Caribbean (in particular Guyana, where I was born) and the other Guyana (Surinam) have a large Indo-Caribbean population, so does Trinidad, and to a lesser extent Jamaica

and some other Caribbean countries. Those of us who have immigrated or migrated to North America and later to Europe often find ourselves in a between and betwixt sense of belonging since our identities are not understood for all its complexities, since our cultural identities tend to be reduced to a larger dominant or normative labelling as simply South Asian. This wipes away the process of creolization and its influences on people who have been removed from the space and place of India for many generations, while some Indo-Caribbean people might have retained some vestiges of Indian culture (food, clothing, or religion), these identities have adapted and transformed through creolization in the spaces of the Caribbean and through immigration to North America or Europe. In essence, there is no cultural purity and this is most pronounced for Caribbean people.

It is important that contemporary art centres, film festival programmers, broadcasters, and funders begin to think about and understand that diasporic identities are truly multi-ethnic, multi-racial, cross-pollinated cultures and therefore the art forms (in particular my work) approaches and questions these complexities and not paint a surface or expected representation of diasporic cultures by simply reducing people who are three-four generations living in the Caribbean, but have ancestral lineage from India (they were brought to the Caribbean and Guyana as indentured labour in 1838).

Can you speak to the hidden Caribbean perspective within the South Asian diaspora?

The South Asian diasporas are multiple and varied since they have been scattered in many countries across the world. My work (previous films such as *Coconut/Cane & Cutlass* (1994), *Child-Play* (1996) and more recently *Queer Coolie-tudes* are all concerned with varying degrees of recuperating a presence and visibility (including queer Indo-Caribbean diasporic presence) in visual media through its subject matter, aesthetics and the visualization of these nuanced representations of Indo-Caribbean identities, lives, cultures, and diverse experiences. Indo-Caribbean people are constituted through a lineage to South Asia, but a result of migration and immigration Indo-Caribbean identities and cultures have also been transformed through creolization, it is this sense of in-between cultures, which has fragmented diasporic identities but also lends nuanced and rich identities which might not readily be understood or recognized as distinct.

What would you like people to take from *Queer Coolie-tudes*, particularly in Glasgow?

Hopefully, audiences will watch *Queer Coolie-tudes* with an attentive and focused understanding of the queer ethnographies represented in the film and how the oblique and fluid aesthetics in this work seeks to profoundly mirror and shape the representations of the lives, histories and lived experiences of its subjects. To know that Indo-Caribbean people are not monolithic, this film attempts to represent some of that diversity and complexity of lived experiences.