

ABSTRACT

The (IN)Visible Minority: Women of Chinese Descent in Trinidad

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Women of Chinese descent in Trinidad are simultaneously visible and invisible. Despite national and regional acknowledgement of the significant cultural and socio-economic influence of the Chinese, female voices are notably absent within the academic literature and early migration history of this visible minority group. In consideration of ethnicity alongside gender, “Chineseness” in combination with “femaleness” lends itself to a “hypervisibility” of these women that is negotiated both publicly and privately alongside “invisibility” in the context of the creolisation of the Chinese. This thesis analyzes the contemporary negotiation of female identity within a select group of women of Chinese descent in Trinidad in the context of “Chineseness”, “hypervisibility”, creolisation, cultural stereotypes, and the gaze.

A short film was produced as a method of investigating this question of hypervisibility. The reflective component provides insight into the filmmaking process and specific choices made in addition to a critical reflection on these choices in the examination of the above regarding

the documentary short film, *Chinee Girl*, that presents a contemporary portrait of fifteen women of Chinese descent.

The written discussion correlates the thematic content of the documentary short film with the relevant theoretical discussions in documentary film theory, feminist postcolonial theory and ethnography. Themes include belonging and non-belonging, difference, Chineseness, identity, and “hypervisibility”. This process of negotiation of identity for women of Chinese descent in Trinidad involves awareness of both Self and Other deeply embedded in the complex dynamics of race, gender and sexuality.

Keywords: Chinese, female, hypervisibility, creolisation, Chineseness, identity, documentary, film