

figures maps new territory in diasporic and national imaginaries; this book is, therefore, a welcome contribution to the field.

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Twenty-one years ago, Columbia University Press published the first edition of Leela Gandhi's *Postcolonial Theory*, when postcolonial studies was, in her words, "the domain of a handful of thinkers. It was very much an emergent field" (ix).¹ In this sense, the publication of the book was timely and much needed; indeed, it was released at a time when no such introductory book was available. Since then postcolonial theory has gained tremendous momentum and become a major critical discourse in literary and cultural studies, although it has faced ongoing constructive challenges from such critics as Gayatri Spivak, Timothy Brennan, Dennis Porter, and Lidan Lin ("Legacy"). When Edward Said published *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), two of his most influential works, his goal was to get Western academics to think about European colonial and postcolonial history from the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century and this history's lingering impact on the contemporary Western world and its former colonies. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, for example, Said argues in *Orientalism* that nineteenth-century European colonialism should be read not only as a historical phenomenon but as a metaphor for racism and oppression in general.

When we look back at the trajectory of postcolonial studies, we see that Said and his fellow cultural critics have clearly achieved their goals. Not only is postcolonial theory a major critical discourse but, because of the global dimension of colonialism and postcolonialism, postcolonial studies has joined internationally oriented fields such as international studies, global studies, and transnational studies. In the present, when imperialistic behavior prevails no less than it used to in some quarters of the world (although carried out in different ways), the second edition of Gandhi's book, with its substantial

and thoughtful epilogue, is still much needed. Looking toward the future, the field of postcolonial studies pulls its strength from the continued intellectual leadership of such scholars as Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Robert Young, Gandhi, and Shaobo Xie, to name a few.

Reading Gandhi's book in this new context, we find in the second edition indications of new directions in postcolonial studies and its new assemblage, or "network" (Gandhi 178), forming and reforming in an ongoing process. Gandhi defines assemblage as "the interactive totality of subject and object, thought and thing, in any effective design" (178). Like the first edition, the second edition contains two major themes: postcolonial theory's intellectual heritage and the antagonistic exchanges between poststructuralist postcolonial thinkers and Marxist postcolonial thinkers.

Gandhi first provides an overarching account of postcolonial theory's intellectual heritage, tracing it back to two historical figures, Frantz Fanon and Mahatma Gandhi, who "contributed to enlightening the anti-colonial project by revealing the 'ethical inadequacy and undesirability' (21) of the West's civilizing mission" (Lin, "Review" 196). Gandhi then outlines Marxist postcolonialism's and poststructuralist postcolonialism's belligerent exchanges. In doing so, Gandhi gives full credit to Said's extraordinary leadership in "single-handedly mov[ing] matters of colony and empire 'center stage' in Anglo-American literary and cultural history" (Gandhi 65). On postcolonialism's troubled relationship with postcolonial feminism, Gandhi shows that while both discourses aim at unsettling the hierarchies of gender/culture/race, postcolonial feminists such as Spivak and Sara Suleri have repeatedly contended that critics have not paid sufficient attention to the double colonization of women under colonialism. In the chapter on postcolonialism's relationship with nationalism, Gandhi reveals the dialectic of nationalism: while metropolitan nationalism faults nativist nationalism for its desire to reclaim cultural roots, both types of nationalisms informed the expansionist politics of empire.

In the book's last section, "The Limits of Postcolonial Theory," Gandhi reflects on the limitations of postcolonial theory, including its tendency to essentialize the colonial experience while neglecting the trans-historical implications of imperialism. This means, for Gandhi, that postcolonial theory must find ways to simultaneously engage the colonized world and its indefinite others. This is the only way that postcolonial theory can serve as an all-inclusive theoretical guide for addressing heterogeneous colonial experiences and achieving the envisioned civil state of "non-violence" (173).

In the epilogue, presented as a "manifesto for postcolonial thinking" (177), Gandhi addresses several issues related to postcolonial studies—each forming

its own short section and concluding with a proposal for new concepts and actions. Gandhi's discussions, though only sketched out, not only help put into perspective the major critical concepts discussed in the body of the book but also outline what Gandhi calls "a contemporary philosophy of renunciation, with a unique proposal for uninjured life and noninjurious community" (177). These discussions also envision new crossovers between academic fields as possible new directions for postcolonial studies, since, as Gandhi argues, "[p]ostcolonial thinking is made up of heterogeneous elements with no internal hierarchies of genre" (177). This democratic notion of collaboration among participatory disciplines or subdisciplines might realistically be difficult to achieve, but that does not mean we should not pursue it. Gandhi then broaches and gives credits to the Western intellectual tradition of self-examination, as exemplified by Western academics' critical dialogues with the Enlightenment, European colonialism, and modernity, even though such self-critique was not effective in curtailing European colonial expansion, as Said deplores in *Orientalism*.

Gandhi presents the notion of planetarity as a part of postcolonial thinking akin to a universal humanism that recognizes equal human worth globally. Gandhi writes: "A final category of the postcolonial assemblage . . . is about aspirations for nonpartisan community and the trusteeship of shared resources. . . . Planetary perspectives conceive the world as an integral whole rather than a sphere to be divided up for resource extraction and by the profit calculus of modern capitalist globalization" (183). However, Gandhi's model for planetary thinking goes beyond global humanity because it draws on "critiques of anthropocentrism" (184) and proposes a "trans-species" (184) approach to postcolonial analysis that links both the anthropocentric and colonialist notions of humanity to the construction of hierarchy. As Gandhi makes clear in her proposal in this section of the epilogue, the concept of imperialism applies to both postcolonial studies and environmental studies to the extent that "[t]he figure of the not-quite-human" in the colonial context is analogous to the species of the "nonhuman" in the "ecological" context: both are "subjections to the same regimes of human power" (184). The nineteenth-century European colonialism that divided the world into two sub-worlds—the colonizing and the colonized—and caused harm and suffering to the colonized is just one example of such "trans-species subjection" (184). Accepting this analogy means, for Gandhi, taking on the "task" of imagining "a new kind of planetary humanism based on interspecies, even interontological, accord" (184).

On the issue of injury, Gandhi proposes postcolonial thinking as a "reckoning with injured life and communities of suffering and a template for

noninjuriousness as a way of life and basis for community” (189). It is not surprising that Gandhi proposes postcolonial liberation as a process of “exit” (191) and “an ethics of departure” (192) in the section on exit. Here exit or departure does not mean escaping from reality; rather, it means positive disengagement from a biased “social contract . . . [in order] to forge a better social contract” (191). Such exits/departures will most likely precede the formation of any new postcolonial assemblage. Gandhi’s call for a universal respect for life, nonviolence, and a new trans-species coexistence signals both postcolonialism’s commitment to expanding its global solidarity and its potential to rise above anthropocentric humanism. Related to the issue of exit is the question of renunciation, which Gandhi addresses in another section in the epilogue. Like exit, renunciation can function as a subversive mechanism for challenging power and domination, especially in light of postsecular concerns. Gandhi writes that “[p]ostsecular perspectives, especially, urge us to consider the disciplines associated with religions in terms of their ongoing validity as *knowledge claims*—and which augur shifts in conventional fields and forms of knowing” (198; emphasis in original). This quote seems to unveil the spiritual and ethical imperative in the postcolonial exit. At the section’s end, Gandhi proposes “receiving and providing refuge” as “a corollary of renunciation in postcolonial thinking” (202).

The book’s newly added bibliography provides an invaluable treasure of resources for anyone interested in postcolonial studies and beyond. The bibliography includes publications by critics who address key issues initiated by Said, such as postcolonial theory’s global solidarity and a non-anthropocentric approach to postcolonial studies. With it, the reader can easily navigate through the extensive coverage of up-to-date scholarship. The new edition is more reader-friendly in this way. Written by an expert postcolonial scholar, this edition is suitable not only for specialists in postcolonial studies but also for college students, instructors, and anyone interested in postcolonial theory and literature.

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Notes

1 For a review of the first edition of Gandhi’s book, see Lin.

2 The authors’ names are in alphabetical order to suggest that we contributed equally to this review.

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