

to cross regional, linguistic, caste, class, and gender borders. What is classic in Bengali may not make that coveted mark in Marathi or Malayalam. In this context, the concept of the classic is much more decentralized. A discussion of this decentralization of the concept would have enriched Mukherjee's argument and made her critique of the Western canon a more effective one. Nevertheless, *What Is a Classic?*, a comprehensive analysis of the conflicts between and the confluences of the postcolonial with the classical and canonical, makes for a very satisfactory reading. It is a book research scholars in postcolonial literary studies must read.

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The Postcolonial and the Global

By REVATHI KRISHNASWAMY AND JOHN C. HAWLEY (Eds.)

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, 344 pp.
doi:10.1017/pli.2015.25

The Postcolonial and the Global is a masterfully written edited volume of nineteen theoretically complex but highly readable chapters, each of which seeks to examine the convergences and divergences between postcolonial studies and global studies. Substantively, the essays deal with such varied topics as world systems analysis, terrorism, area studies, Bollywood films, and the role of sanctions in the collapse of apartheid. This is a much needed and worthwhile endeavor because there are very few texts that cover an area of such breadth and depth.

It is, however, also a tremendously difficult undertaking, the reason being that although postcolonial studies and globalization studies share some conceptual overlap, they have developed autonomously and thus diverge in important ways. A key divergence that the authors seek to both grapple with and overcome is the disciplinary divide between the two. This has meant that most scholarship that occurs under the "postcolonial" umbrella occurs in the humanities while social scientists dominate globalization studies. While recognizing the inherent difficulty posed by disciplinary divergence, the authors' explicit purpose is to use this tension productively. The explicit task of the volume is to examine, from a variety of different angles, the ways in which critical attention to the postcolonial and the global have challenged both the social sciences and humanities and opened up space for rethinking and transforming them. In particular, the authors note the manner in which both postcolonial and globalization studies have challenged the sanctity of the nation-state. One of the key features of a world that is both postcolonial and global is that the nation-state is fundamentally transformed. The essays not only document the varied political and economic features of this transformation, but they also take on the theoretical and methodological challenges and possibilities opened up thereby. One of the

chief methodological issues that a number of the essays take up is that of the collapse of methodological nationalism—that is, the notion that nation-states are “containers” of social groups and social processes and, thus, provide a stable basis for drawing comparisons.

A key intellectual contribution of the volume lies in how the authors confront the question of how to make sense of the world theoretically, conceptually, and methodologically, given our newfound awareness that the analytical bifurcations that were the *sine qua non* of theory construction in both the social sciences and humanities (between the “West” and “East” or “domestic” and “foreign” or the “inside” and “outside” of nations) are simply untenable. The essay that opens the volume states quite plainly that the two main assumptions underlying the volume are to “rethink the possibilities of comparativity” and to “reinvent a critical comparative studies” (4). On balance, the essays devote a lot of space to explaining how the social and political exigencies of colonialism and imperialism were produced and reproduced in the construction of the theoretical apparatus of academic disciplines like sociology, history, and “area studies,” as well as in various theoretical schools like dependency theory, modernization theory, or worlds systems analysis. Nearly equal time is given to explaining how the insights of postcolonial theory and globalization studies are destabilizing and unseating many previously taken for granted theoretical and methodological assumptions. Less space is devoted to charting a way forward. The fact that more space is devoted to diagnoses than to “cure” does not reflect any kind of weakness in the text. Nor does it indicate inattentiveness on the part of the authors. Rather, it speaks to the difficulty of the task as well as the authors’ recognition of the fact that the urge on the part of both social sciences and the humanities to construct “grand theory” or make “universal” propositions is one of the intellectual legacies of a colonial “will to power” that needs to be both challenged and overcome.

Taken collectively the essays suggest that the past must be continually revisited and that the tensions between “the postcolonial” and “the global” are constantly changing and can never be fully captured by a single theoretical perspective, discipline, or school of thought. The way to chart new directions for producing knowledge lies in sustained engagement with the ever-evolving conditions of the postcolonial and the global.

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