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Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003. viii + 300 pp. $23.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8223-3021-9; $84.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8223-3010-3.

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Global Feminist Solidarity and Anti-Capitalism: Towards an Integration of

In this volume, women's studies professor Chandra Talpade Mohanty contextualizes the development over the last two decades of her own concerns as a scholar-activist within a larger history of feminism and anti-imperialism. An influential theorist of Third World and transnational feminisms, Mohanty is best known for two earlier collections she co-edited: *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (1991), and *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (1997). Her new book moves beyond postmodernist relativism to embrace historical materialism and validate marginalized women's experiences as a site from which the workings of power can be made visible. Focusing on a critique of global capitalism, the volume deserves particular credit for its efforts to integrate theory and practice, most notably through advocacy of "emancipatory knowledge" (p. 1) and "feminist solidarity" (p. 3). Both concepts are theoretically and politically nuanced. Mohanty validates the multiple sources of feminist ideas, whether academic or non-academic, experiential or theoretical, urging readers to make such forms of knowledge the basis of political consciousness and action. Her concept of solidarity moves beyond Robin Morgan's idea of sisterhood, which Mohanty criticizes for assuming too much homogenity among women and "seem[ing] predicated on the erasure of the history and effects of contemporary imperialism" (pp. 110-111).[1] Solidarity, by contrast, involves "mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities" (p. 7).

Feminism Without Borders consists of an introduction and nine chapters, most of which have been previously published. Mohanty envisioned the book having a "spiral structure, since the chapters move in and out of similar queries, but at many different levels" (p. 12). They are arranged in three sections: "Decolonizing Feminism," "Demystifying Capitalism," and "Reorienting Feminism." Part 1 opens with the classic article, "Under Western Eyes." First published in 1986, it has been translated into eight languages and has been reprinted many times. Part 3 consists of a single, new essay, "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." Here Mohanty addresses criticisms of her earlier work and reflects upon the shift in her focus over the years from Eurocentrism in Western scholarship about Third World women to global capitalism, which she identifies as a crucial site of struggle against patriarchy and racism.

This chapter addresses issues important to many women's studies faculty, namely how to make our classes more global in content and how to encourage activism among students. While feminist courses today incorporate differences of race, class, and sexuality more fully than they did two decades ago, the focus has tended to remain on how those experiences intersect in particular, typically Western, contexts. Also, many feminist professors lament that undergraduates today are much less likely to engage in political activism than their predecessors in the late 1960s and 1970s, when women's studies emerged as a force on many campuses. Mohanty responds to both concerns. She advocates a Feminist Solidarity/Comparative Feminist Studies pedagogy linking the local and the global in new ways that challenge prevailing power hierarchies and transcend the limitations of earlier approaches. Those problematic but influential models of internationalizing the women's studies curriculum include the Feminist-as-Tourist model, which Mohanty dismisses as "additive" and Eurocentric, casting Third World women as victims of exotic oppression such as dowry deaths in India. Similarly, the area-studies-influenced Feminist-as-Explorer model takes an inadequate "separate but equal" approach marked by cultural relativism. The comparative model, by contrast, "allows for teaching and learning about points of connec-

tion and distance among and between communities of women marginalized and privileged along numerous local and global dimensions" (p. 243). While specific examples of how to implement this comparative model would strengthen the chapter, Mohanty's assertions are intriguing. What she advocates would highlight "relations of mutuality, co-responsibility, and common interests, anchoring the idea of feminist solidarity" (p. 242) and encourage students to "envision the possibility of activism and struggle outside the academy" (p. 243).

The most compelling parts of the book are those drawing upon the author's analysis of what she has experienced first hand. Mohanty integrates theory and practice most fully in these sections, notably chapter 5, "Genealogies of Community, Home, and Nation," and chapter 8, "Race, Multiculturalism, and Pedagogies of Dissent." Both chapters address the notion of "borders," a concern informed by Mohanty's own transnational experiences growing up in Mumbai (Bombay), teaching in Nigeria, conducting research in London, and now as a U.S. citizen, post-September 11, 2001. In these different settings she has identified with or been cast in a wide range of categories: "Indian," "Third-World foreigner," "black," "Asian," and "person of color." Reading American feminist authors in the early 1980s, such as Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga and many others, had a profound impact on Mohanty. She explains that "in thinking through the links among gender, race, and class in their U.S. manifestations, I was for the first time able to think through my own gendered, classed, postcolonial history" (p. 129).

The most important section of the book may be chapter 8, where Mohanty's participant-observer skills are particularly sharp in her critique of the corporatizing of academe. She traces the emergence of the corporate university and its role in "naturalizing capitalist, privatized citizenship" (p. 173). In this context, there has been a backlash against feminist scholars (p. 175) and the development of a "careerist academic feminism," in which feminism has become a way to advance individual careers rather than a call for collective activism or radical transformation (p. 6). The discussion of institutional prejudice-reduction workshops provides compelling empirical support for Mohanty's views. By drawing on psychologically based notions of prejudice rather than historically sensitive understandings of structural inequality, such workshops identify racism and sexism in individualized terms subject to behavioral modification rather than calling for collective political action (p. 209). Mohanty's critique of the inadequacies of an approach relying so heavily upon individualized definitions of "experience" underscores the value of her own analysis of "experience" as something requiring comparative context leading to feminist solidarity.

The book offers insights that will appeal to feminist scholars working in a variety of disciplines, and historians may be particularly appreciative of the author's attention to historical context and change-over-time. The collection would also be appropriate for graduate students in women's studies, feminist theory, or postcolonial studies who would benefit from having so many of Mohanty's writings collected in a single volume. By tracing the development of important feminist concerns over the last generation, the sections originally published in the 1980s and 1990s would be helpful to those new to the subject. However, less-motivated undergraduate and non-specialist readers would likely find the book's academic tone and densely argued prose difficult. This is unfortunate given the author's commitment to reaching an audience of activists as well as scholars (p. 10). Nevertheless, the book offers benefits to all readers as a particular example of "emancipatory knowledge" forged in the context of Mohanty's own experience as a border-crossing feminist academic.

Note

[1]. Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology* (New York: Anchor Press, 1984).

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