

The Indian Empire and its Colonial Practices in South Asia

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### Recommended Citation

Aryal, Yubraj. "The Indian Empire and its Colonial Practices in South Asia." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 19.2 (2017): [<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2947>](https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2947)

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**Volume 19 Issue 2 (June 2017) Article 2**  
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**"The Indian Empire and its Colonial Practices in South Asia"**  
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol19/iss2/2>>

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Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 19.2 (2017)**  
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol19/iss2/>>

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**Abstract:** In his article "The India, Empire and its Colonial Practices in South Asia" Yubraj Aryal claims that Bharatiya discourse supports colonization in South Asia. This discourse justifies oppression of institutions, practices, of the non-Bharatiya colonized. The article examines Indian Empire's colonialism toward the weaker, smaller nations along its border and the Bharatiya ideology at the heart of the repressive empire, which is taken to represent the South Asian subcontinent. The article looks at the way in which Bharatiya is perhaps a more oppressive ideology than Orientalism and gives a glimpse into how society, culture, history, and textuality work around power relations to form a specific form of oppression.

## YUBRAJ ARYAL

### The Indian Empire and its Colonial Practices in South Asia

When India gained liberation from the rule of the British Empire in 1947, it was hoped that the new nation would provide the region with economic stability, border security, and a model of democratic politics to countries under the grip of tyrannical domestic regimes. However, the opposite result emerged when India imitated and perpetuated the practices of its colonial master. India has attempted to create structures to exploit the resources of neighboring countries, inciting internal conflicts and destabilizing those countries, feeding authoritarian regimes for its own benefit, and taking advantage of the weak or absent democratic institutions in newly independent countries. The oppressed, when liberated, has aspired to become a new oppressor. This goal grew from an expansionist desire, a colonial desire inherited from India's prehistory—the time of *Bharatbarsha*.

The revival of India's old colonial desire under the new incarnation of the British Raj can be witnessed in Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of the newly independent republic who visited Nepal in 1959. When he saw gorgeous, snow-capped Himalayan peaks smiling like the rows of his own white teeth, he felt a mystic union with the Himalayas and recalled his ancestor's claim that the Himalayas are the northern border of Bharatbarsha. Just four years later, during an intense border dispute with China in 1963, Nehru wrote a letter to Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai claiming the Himalayas as India's northern border, citing Hindu scriptures as evidence: "This northern frontier of India is for much of its length the crest of the Himalayan ranges. The Himalayas have always dominated Indian life, just as they have dominated the Indian landscape. One of the earliest Sanskrit texts, though its date is uncertain—the *Visnu Purna*—makes it clear that the Himalayas formed the frontier of India. It states that the country south of the Himalayas and north of the ocean is called Bharat, and all born in it are called Bharatiyas or Indians" (Eck, *India* 66). For much of the length of India, the crest of the Himalayan range is its northern frontier. The Himalayas have always dominated Indian life, just as they have dominated the Indian landscape. The *Visnu Purna*, one of the earliest Sanskrit texts whose date is uncertain, makes it clear that the Himalayas formed the frontier of India. The scripture states that the country south of the Himalayas and north of the ocean is called Bharat, and that all born in it are called *Bharatiyas*, or Indians.

As expressed in Nehru's letter, this Indian myth and dream of the Himalayas as its northern border bears the imprint of colonialism in the subcontinent. Nehru's claim is exclusively the product of the Hindu extremist mindset. He omits the many autonomous states and communities which escaped the Hindu state formation project of Bharatbarsha. One of such state was Nepal. The Hindu epic *Mahabharata* mentions the non-Hindu Kirati King Yalamber (one of the Nepali creation myths identifies him as a king of Nepal), killed by Lord Krishna who feared that Yalamber might help the Kauravas gain victory in the Kurukshetra war. Twenty-nine Kirata kings ruled for approximately 1,225 years (800 BCE–300 CE). Nepal's most popular creation myth says that, not so long ago, the Kathmandu Valley was a large lake. Manju Sri, a Tibetan traveler, drained the water from the south and made the valley habitable. He became the first king of the Kathmandu Valley. Over time, people from the Indus Valley civilization (Bharatbarsha) to the south and from Tibet migrated into Nepali territory. Migration from the south surged after the Mughal invasion of Bharatbarsha, and the Hindu Bharatiya escaped the Muslim invasion by migrating to the Nepali hills. Nehru also blatantly ignored the existence of the kingdom of Nepal in the lap of the Himalayas as a sovereign, autonomous state alongside the mighty *Bharatbarsha* in the South.

Close examination of Nehru's scriptural references supporting the imperial foundation of Bharatbarsha reveals that these claims are merely an exclusionary Hindu colonial ideology handed down through Indian history. According to Hindu mythology, Bharata was the founder and emperor of Bharatbarsha (modern-day India) and the ancestor of the Pandavas and Kauravas, as described in the Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata*. According the *Adi Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, Bharat's parents, King Dushyanta of Hastinapura, and Queen Sakuntala entrusted him with uniting the various tribe-based kingdoms and ruling the South Asian subcontinent as Mahabharat (Greater India). The *Adi Parva* of the *Mahabharata* states that King Dushyanta gave the following command to his son: "The country south of the Himalayas and north of the ocean is called Bharat, and all born in it are called Bharatiyas" (my translation) ("अभूतिर् एषा कस् त्यज्याज् जीवञ् जीवन्तम् आत्मजम् शकुन्तलं महात्मानं दौःषन्तिं भर पौरव भर्तव्योऽयं त्वया यस्माद् अस्माकं वचनाद् अपि तस्माद् भवत्व् अयं नाम्ना भरतो नाम ते सुतः उत्तरं यत्समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम् । वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारती यत्र संततिः ॥" [*Mahabharat* 74 sec. [113-14]). The King then retreated to the jungle for ascetic practices. Bharata conquered the lands south to the Indian Ocean and north to the Himalayas,

including parts of present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, northwest Tibet, Nepal, and Bangladesh. The conquered territories were named Bharatavarsha after him. King Bharat was given the titles of Chakravarti (emperor), *Sarvabhauma* (sovereign), and *Sarvadamana* (the subduer of all).

However, several kingdoms in the South Asian subcontinent could manage to maintain their independence and existed alongside the mighty Bharat empire. These tribes escaped the state formation projects of emperors and sultans from the time of the Indus Valley civilization to the Vedic period and the medieval age through Portuguese, French, Mughal, and British colonization of the South Asian subcontinent. The term South Asian subcontinent signifies that this geographical region has had autonomous areas and peoples. Some were cowherds (Gopal), some buffalo herders (Mahispal), and some fishermen. They were never ruled by King Bharat nor belonged to Bharatbarsha. How these tribes managed to remain autonomous and what arts they deployed to avoid being governed and to preserve their autonomy could be a topic for researchers.

In northern Bharatbarsha, many such autonomous kingdoms along the Himalayas were united by King Prithibi Narayan Shah in his state formation project, leading to the birth of modern Nepal in 1768. This country is one of the most ancient civilizations in Asia. There, the Lord Buddha and the goddess Sita, wife of the god Ram, were born, and Siva, the supreme god, founded the source of the Hindu civilization (in several Hindu myths, Lord Shiva roams the northern Himalayas which are called Kailash). Nepal's autonomy is mentioned in the creation myth of this Himalayan kingdom. Its history tells us that different dynasties ruled the land over time, evading Mughal emperors and sultans in medieval Bharatbarsha and colonial Britain in modern times. This history of independence is a legacy that every Nepali feels committed to preserving.

When Nehru saw the Himalayas during his Nepal visit in 1959, he recalled his ancestor's unfulfilled desire to extend Bharatbarsha to the Himalayas in the north. Nehru felt like he was in his ancestor's homeland. He perceived himself as an emperor robbed of lands his ancestor had conquered and ruled or, if history is incorrect, at least dreamt of doing so. He did not see Nepal between the southern Himalayas and northern India.

Nehru and his home minister Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel then conceived the expansionist ambition to annex Nepal. Nehru tried to become the new emperor, subduer, and sovereign of those smiling Himalayas in the north. However, the situation was quite unfavorable for a recently independent nation to colonize another newly founded nation. That would tarnish India's pro-democracy, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial image. Occupying a country which had never been colonized and had formally recognized India's own independence in 1923 would destroy India's aspirations as a newly independent, democratic country. Like Emperor Bharat, Nehru merely revived the vision of the Bharatbarsha, a single nation south from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Empire, though, never accepted the autonomy of Nepal, except in treaties and speeches. It regards Nepal as a part of Bharatbarsha. This colonial desire has emerged not only from historical forces but also from India's modern need for vast natural resources, including waters from the Himalayas vital for the irrigation of the Bihar state. The Indian Empire also wants to expand its market in Nepal and prevent its market from being reduced or outperformed by the Chinese goods. India wants to import precious herbs and teas from the Himalayas and export potatoes and tomatoes to Nepal. These goals resemble British exploitation of India.

Other countries in South Asia, including Nepal, are not only partners in India's commerce and the sources of its civilizations and languages; they are also its cultural references and the recurring image of its other. South Asian countries have helped define India as savior, big brother, adult brother, and benevolent neighbor. Brotherhood—Hindu brotherhood with Nepal, Tamil brotherhood with Sri Lanka—is a powerful ideological tool of the Indian Empire, which sees other South Asian countries as constantly dependent on its care. India's doctrine of brotherhood is reflected in institutions, speeches, scholarship, imagery, doctrine, and colonial bureaucracies and styles.

In the imperial ideology of brotherhood, the big brother assumes the role of protector, authority, and responsible guardian of younger siblings. In the name of caring for them, the big brother generally imposes his will on his younger ones. This ideology undermines the principle that, no matter the size of nations, their sovereignty, integrity, and independence should be respected. Indian foreign minister Susma Swaraj sought to transform the country's image as the big brother of Nepal and stated that India instead wanted to be Nepal's adult brother. This terminology merely replaced one word with another and did not change India's interest and ambitions in domination. It is bizarre to observe how the Indian Empire deploys its ideology of brotherhood—the politics of the sameness. This is something different than European colonialism because European colonialism treated people in their colonies as other. Such a politics of the sameness coverts everything: the empire shields its younger brothers

from the external world and makes them solely dependent on it in diplomacy, economics, and governance. India so far has acted as a big brother trying to prevent Bhutan from opening diplomatic relations with China and other countries. King Mahendra Bir Birkram Shaha of Nepal faced a harsh economic blockade as punishment for his bold refusal to obey big brother's advice and open diplomatic relations with China in 1962. The Indian Empire intensified ethnic conflict between the Tamil and Sinhalese, armed the Tamil, and overthrew Rajapakha's government to force Sri Lanka to accept the empire's demands. The sermon of brotherhood is often intensified just to cover up such colonial atrocities.

The atrocities of the Indian Empire do not end there. A popular belief in Nepal holds that the 2001 royal massacre, in which popular King Birendra Bikram Shaha was killed, was organized by the empire after the king became an obstacle to realizing its interests in Nepal. Assassination of those who disobey is another tool of Indian colonialism. Can the subaltern speak before the empire? Anyone who questions the bullying of the Empire is assassinated or otherwise subdued, which makes the questioning itself irrelevant. Based on these examples, we can make some sense of how the horrendous and aggressive colonialism of the Indian Empire has been hidden behind the ideology of brotherhood.

The Indian empire, in fact, views its so-called younger siblings not as brothers but as its dependent others. This cultural perception permeates academia, politics, and culture. Even as the ideology of brotherhood is the main justification of colonization, the empire employs the colonial strategy of exclusion. Key cultural concepts, such as Bharatiya (Indian) and non-Bharatiya, are helpful to understand this strategy. Bharatiya refers not only to ideas and attitudes but also to gestures, presence, and the body. Bharatiya has been reconstructed in the arts, biology, anthropology, linguistics, race, religion, and history. What we can see that the term Bharatiya indicates a group of ideas that legitimate Bharatiya superiority, various kinds of racism, colonialism, bullying brotherhood, and unchanging reality. In this context, to be Bharatiya is not a fact but a political construction with interests in the non-Bharatiya. It is the product of the power exercised over the historically oppressed non-Bharatiya since the time of Mahabharat or Bharatbarsha. The empire has constructed systematic disciplines and corporate intuitions to deal with the non-Bharatiya politically, culturally, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively. No one can write about Bharatiya nationalism, culture, and identity without considering how it others non-Bharatiya at the same time. This does not mean that the non-Bharatiya concept solely determines the empire's relations with its neighbors.

Non-Bharatiya is not merely a field hidden by the culture, scholarship, and institutions of the Indian Empire; rather, it is a description of the basic political distinction between Bharatiya and non-Bharatiya and a whole series of realities created through the technologies of domination sustaining the opposite of Bharatiya as its other. Non-Bharatiya is distributed throughout aesthetics, cultures, and institutions. It is, therefore, a discourse made invisible through which the colonial power of the Indian Empire operates. It functions in myriad ways: a colonial establishment in New Delhi, the intellectual power of subaltern and postcolonial studies, and the cultural power of Hinduism. Non-Bharatiya is not a fact; it is a modern political construction more related to the Indian Empire's colonial ideology than the actualities of people living within and beyond the Indian Empire. There might be an attempt to keep the Indian nation's postcolonial knowledge pure, but it is tainted with the obliteration wrought by the postcolonial nation's double standards, hypocrisy, and mimicry of hybrid colonial strategies employed by its former colonial master. To talk about one's oppression is certainly acceptable, but to obliterate and treat another as nonexistent is nothing other than hypocrisy.

Bharatiya did not simply exist but was made by the Indian Empire; it is not part of human nature but a political construction. It extends to a certain geography and invades certain autonomous tribes. It treats any people who refuse to be controlled by the empire as anti-Bharatiya. Non-Bharatiya is the other to Bharatiya. It is what Bharatiya is not, and the annexation of non-Bharatiya's lands, nations, and identities into Mahabharat (Greater India) is an historical desire the Empire.

During the extraordinary ascendancy of the Indian Empire since the departure of the East India Company, scientists, scholars, businesspeople, and soldiers have sought to dominate or simply dismiss the non-Bharatiya as insignificant. Concurrently, the rise of the West (the United States, in particular) resulted in some population migrating there. These migrants also see non-Bharatiya as either non-existent or not worthy of reading and writing about. What was alluring to them, especially humanities scholars, was writing and reading about western colonialism, which helped them to secure attractive positions in the West. These intellectuals' writings emphasize British colonialism to the exclusion of the Indian Empire's colonialism. Their writings bring to light the exploitation, death, suffering, and tyranny inflicted by the British Empire and portray India as a nation growing economically and politically as it emerges from colonialism. This perspective renders invisible the

condition of the positivity of the Indian Empire: its colonial re-incarnation of its former British master. When one order died and was buried, a new one was born.

The writings of postcolonial scholars of Indian origin have contributed to making Bharatiya culture hegemonic over non-Bharatiya. This does not mean that one should not write to enhance one's culture, but these scholars have ignored the responsibility to critique how Indian cultural superiority sustains its hegemony over other cultures in the region. These intellectuals are not, after all, universal humanist scholars, given that they have approached their professional work from specific concerns, belief sets, and social positions. Whether their literary productions are fraught with political signification might be a large question. However, I contend that their literary, theoretical, and artistic productions which ignore the colonialism and exploitation by this postcolonial nation cannot be considered nonpolitical. Those who produce postcolonial texts of the Indian nation are not innocent producers of pure knowledge.

The conditions of these texts' production are based on the segregation of their (past or present) nation-state's colonialism, its adaptation of the British Raj, and its desire to be the new Raj, preeminent in at least the subcontinent, if not the globe. They do not even acknowledge strangers; they even do not regard the people of those nations as their other. Recognizing someone as a stranger or the other grants the status of identity. The postcolonial scholars of the Indian descent refuse to give them even that status; they simply treat strangers as nonexistent, unlike European colonialism, which largely operates by othering the other. For Indian postcolonialists, the others of the Indian Empire are the Chinese, Americans, and, to some extent, the Pakistani (because they possess nuclear arms).

The Indian imperial machine simply does not recognize the existence of others. It is all about itself. For it, the South Asian region means the Indian region. It is ancient Bharat Barsha or Mahabharat (Greater India). The same view can be found in academia. I do not have precise numbers, but I have not heard of any Nepali hired as faculty members in South Asian studies programs at American universities. I do not think that there are many Bhutanese or Maldives either and only a few Bangladesh and Pakistani. This means that these programs at U.S. universities have been taken over by Indian nations. Not only the faculty but also the courses, texts, and teaching methodologies are dominated by those who represent the institution of the Indian Empire, even outside its boundaries, far away in the U.S. This is a more dangerous situation than the Orientalism perceived by Edward Said.

Orientalism at least recognizes the identity of the Orient as a snake charmer or lazy, dirty collectives. The exotic other as seers, snake charmers, wizards, and witches touches upon the precious substance of one's humanity. I might feel differently if I were part of the colonial societies of Europe. However, as a representative of a society colonized by the postcolonial nation of India, I think it might not be too negative to have at least some form of recognition. In Orientalism, existence and identity are established as the other. In the concept of non-Bharatiya, human beings in colonized societies do figure even as the other. Only these people know how painful is to live as a nonexistent being in another's perspective, compared to being recognized as a stranger or the other's inferior. We who live in the colonized nations of the Indian Empire lose the otherness of the other not because the Indian Empire treats us as the same but because the sameness of the other is used as a technology of colonialism.

This is different from the Levinasian view of the other as an infinite sameness of "I." If the Indian Empire thinks of us as the same, it wants us to undergo Bharatiyazition and merge our territory into its own. This is a negative sameness, a colonized incorporation rather than the benevolent kindness of the Christ to which Levinas's concept of the other refers (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* 121). The Orient can at least feel its existence in its denial. The people of the Fourth World—the colonized nations of the postcolonial nations—suffer identitylessness in two ways. On one hand, the Indian Empire obliterates the historical facts that define the nation-states and people on its border. For example, the Lord Buddha and Mount Everest are the foundation of Nepali identity, but not a single text in the West states that Buddha was born in Nepal and that Mount Everest is in Nepal. Students are taught that both the Buddha and Mount Everest belong to India. The Indian empire, through its publishing media, has created and disseminated that knowledge globally. This empire has constructed the artificial Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, in Uttar Pradesh and the impression that Mount Everest is a Himalayan peak in northern India. The nation of Nepal and its people have been so systematically buried in the shadow of the empire that many think that Nepal that is part of India.

To be blind to all these realities, whether consciously or unconsciously, is to be part of the Bharatiya machine. One's knowledge is not automatically innocent or holy. To not speak about any form of oppression is to be part of the machinery of oppression. The oppressive regime has fixed what you want to see in the Bharatiya and how you want to see it. The marginalized, repressed, and

colonized non-Bharatiya possess enormous creativity, but they are repressed and need our help. They want to transcend their circumstances, but Bharatiya renders them insignificant. The big brother cannot tolerate the small brother's self-development and exercise of freedom.

Going to the atomistic level of the empire and disconnecting oneself from the overarching thread without building a concurrent individuality might be considered distortion and inaccuracy, but it reveals the depth of the empire. The empire politicizes every field of knowledge at the micro level. Its intelligence bureau RAW is entrusted with the reproduction, proliferation, and infiltration of populations; the analysis and complete control of economic systems; intelligent scrutiny of political systems and political leaders' movements and activities; control of literary, journalistic, and cultural activities; and implementation of divide-and-rule and stick-and-carrot policies among leaders and bureaucrats.

Such deployment and control recalls the Gramscian observation that political society takes over the realms of civil society as the academy and brings the academy into existence to serve its purposes (Gramsci, *The Prison* 194). The transition from the gurukul academy (schools of saints and monks) to the modern, capitalist university-based academy in the Indian empire has realized that specific purpose. The objective research by those politically funded institutions serves the political function of the empire to classify and possess accurate, exact knowledge and ways to silence or maintain deliberate ignorance of knowledge. One of the greatest Indian poets Rabindranath Tagore grasped and resisted this reality from the inside as a member of a powerful class, writing, "Where knowledge is free .../ Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake" (Tagore "Where"162). Tagore well knew how the political machinery produces and disseminates knowledge through civil society, which over time absorbs it as the only true, innocent, and pure form of knowledge.

The empire's political machinery retains the expertise to invade civil society with the political. It knows how to incite civil society and charge it with the political will of the empire as if it were its own, as if the empire's desires were the best course for it. For example, a certain section of the Sikkim people was made to accept incorporation into India—rather than the weak rule of their king—at the cost of their identity, nationality, and culture. All academic knowledge and even ignorance (or non-knowledge) of other South Asian countries are violated by gross political fact. Said states that "no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject" (11).

These political actualities are bizarre and yet unwritten and unheard of. These realities might matter less to those who are not their victims. Bharatiya's deliberate sidelining of non-Bharatiyan realities—constructed by its aggressive political, economic, and military interventions to render the non-Bharatiya nonexistent—is a deliberate political act, not innocent ignorance. For postcolonial writers of Indian descent, there is no denying that they have ignored the discussion of non-Bharatiya, Bharatiya hegemony, and their postcolonial nation's colonial aggression in the region.

A revolutionary intellectual politics does not erase or ignore one form of oppression in favor of another and does not avoid its responsibility to read and write against colonial aggression by any nation in textual and historical scholarship. Postcolonial studies in general and South Asian studies in particular (this is also true in African and East Asian studies) cannot seriously study the hegemony and colonialism of postcolonial nations towards their peripheries. "If the postcolonial has always been concerned with interrogating the interrelated histories of violence, domination, inequality, and injustice," then the ignorance of postcolonial nation is blatant (Young 20):

Whether there is no longer domination by nondemocratic forces (often exercised on others by Western democracies, as in the past), or economic and resource exploitation enforced by military power, or a refusal to acknowledge the sovereignty of non-Western countries, and whether peoples or cultures still suffer from the long-lingering aftereffects of imperial, colonial, and neocolonial rule, albeit in contemporary forms such as economic globalization. Analysis of such phenomena requires shifting conceptualizations, but it does not necessarily require the regular production of new theoretical...: the issue is rather to locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism's historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken. In a sense, postcolonialism has always been about the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies. (Young 20-21)

For these colonized societies, the postcolonial is something about which they heard and read. It is always the future yet to come. The "post" is yet to come. Colonialism remains: it lives on, ceaselessly transformed into new configurations in the present. The postcolonial mindset has taken hold in almost all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, from classics to contemporary area studies, from legal studies to theology, from cultural studies to sociology. Arjun Appadurai has emphasized the need to shift studies of the postcolonial world from a narrow national focus to the context of present-day

globalization. However, he has assumed that all societies are already postcolonial, as if there were no non-western societies on earth living alongside postcolonial or postindependence nations (*Modernity* 2). The coercion of national sovereignty and the violation of the territorial integrity of weaker nations in the Global South have not come to globalized attention. So many theorists have established the postcolonial in the humanities and social sciences; so many subdisciplines and areas of studies, such as diaspora and transnational studies, have reached into nearly every domain of contemporary thought. However, the conditions under which the colonialism of post-independence countries toward their peripheries are ignored by high-profile theorists as if such colonialism, hegemony, and oppression do not exist. Postcolonialism to these victims is not about radical politics; it is the bourgeoisie capitalist and elitist academic enterprise of a few former postcolonial nations whose performativity renders one form of colonialism visible and other forms invisible. Postcolonialism is fascist in its ends; it is incomplete and narrowly focused on postindependence societies. It hides in its soul racism, hatred, xenophobia, and stereotypes of those living on the peripheries of nations. Postcolonialism attempts to incorporate into itself every issue that arises in the contemporary world, such as indigenous struggles and their relation to settler colonialism, illegal migration, and political Islam, but never raises the questions I do here.

Introduced by Gramsci and revised by its proponents, postcolonial studies' reconceptualization of the subaltern speaks to the invisibility of indigenous people and their voices and interests (see Chakravorty, "Can the Subaltern Speak" 47). Gramsci's concept has enabled subaltern historians and cultural critics to recover a whole arena of historical agency that remained invisible when history was written according to exclusive protocols of nationalist movements and class conflicts. However, this history has been written within the national boundaries of the Indian Empire. If it ever crossed these boundaries, it crossed into an analysis of immigrants from the South Asian subcontinent to the west. It has never turned its attention to how the neo-oppressors which were formerly oppressed have exploited people of other nationalities—the non-Bharatiya—within the Indian Empire or beyond its borders. For postcolonial scholars, the Indian subaltern matters, but what about the Nepali subaltern, the Bhutanese refuge subaltern, the Sri Lanka subaltern, or the Bangladeshi subaltern? What role does the colonial aggression of the Indian Empire play in their subalternity? How can they speak against their powerful oppressor?

The politics of invisibility involve not actual invisibility but the refusal by those in power to see who or what is there. The task of the postcolonial is to make visible what the colonial power has made invisible. The indigenous voices and the anticolonial struggles of North and South America have recently been included, and in this sense, the invisible has been rendered visible. The anticolonial struggles against the dominant nation-states within these regions, however, have been deliberately ignored, whether in the South Asian subcontinent, African continent, or the South China Sea region. Rather than demanding inclusion of this subject matter within postcolonial studies, I propose a separate area of study for the colonialism of postcolonial nations. Given the scope of this area, studies on postcolonial nations' colonialism could be as broad as postcolonial studies. Colonialism and its exploitation and repercussions in all spheres of life are as broad as those of European colonialism and its exploitation of postcolonial countries. Superficial incorporation is not enough. The Third World has been taken over by powerful postcolonial nations. Its oppressed peripheries are shadowed by its most dominant nations. The peripheries of the postcolonial nations constitute the Fourth World.

Colonialism and the oppression we suffer today in the Fourth World are not a part of our past, a haunting memory; they are our living present, the recurring reality of everydayness. The postcolonial viewpoint and method are redundant and unhelpful for the study of contemporary colonized nations' struggles for freedom. Thinking societies colonized by the postcolonial nations and their anti-colonial struggles through a postcolonial frame is impossible. Postcolonial nations' colonialism is more atrocious than settler colonialism—the colonization of marginal or indigenous groups by others. Settler colonialism occurs within a nation-state, so the settler bears some responsibilities and obligations. Postcolonial nations are free from such national considerations. Border encroachments and attacks on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Fourth World have become everyday phenomena. The West is too far away to hear about it, and if some western nations did, they might think that they are potential defenders of democracy and freedom. It is not a race or a civilization but the nationalities of these people which have become the primary targets of postcolonial nations' colonialism.

The political questions raised by Bharatiya concern what political, intellectual, artistic, economic, military, and cultural investments have been made to construct the non-Bharatiya. How have anthropology, philology, lexicography, biology, history, literary writing, art production, and the political and economic sciences been made to serve Bharatiyabad? What transformations, changes, and breaks have taken place within Bharatiyabad? How has Bharatiya transmitted and reproduced

itself? How can we perceive how *bhai-bhaiko sambandha*, *rosiroti*, and *betiko sambandha* are defined by Bharatbarsha and its neighbors? This does not mean that all knowledge produced by Bharatbarsha, including yoga, meditation, and the Kama Sutra, is intensely political. I only claim that knowledge and power are connected in specific case studies and forms of epistemology.

Some methodological problems seem challenging. What should be the point of departure from postcolonial studies? What texts, art objects, ideas, authors, periods, and areas can be put together to study postcolonial nations' colonialism? The primary challenge is that there does not exist a practice of creating poetry and novel-writing about postcolonial nations' colonialism. Literary writers and creative artists have not explored this field for several reasons. Why do people write less about their own repression? In this case of a lack of texts, I suppose that people might think that the empire is too great to be challenged. Another possible reason is that there is not a developed practice of writing about transnational or between-country experiences of each other—although some great films tackle familial, cultural, and political relations, especially between the people of India and Pakistan. The anticolonial struggles and effects of colonialism have been documented largely only in journalistic writing. Pakistani non-Bharatiya are different than Nepali non-Bharatiya; Bangladeshi non-Bharatiya are different than Sri Lankan non-Bharatiya. Within Sri Lankan non-Bharatiya, Hindu Sinhalese are closer to Bharatiya than the Buddhist Tamil. In the case of Nepali non-Bharatiya, Madheshi Nepalis are closer to the empire than the Pahadi Nepali Non-Bharatiya.

I do not attempt to detail the entire history of narratives of Bharatiya but select some which show the connections between knowledge and politics. The historical narratives themselves do not speak to what I am trying to say, so I attempt to make a sizable amount of texts speak. How the Bharatiya see the Chinese, Arabs, Islam, Middle Easterners, and Africans is not covered in my study. Those peoples are the Far non-Bharatiya rather than the Near non-Bharatiya living on the Indian Empire's immediate geographical border who are poor and politically unstable and are my concern. The Near non-Bharatiya cannot be discussed without discussing the Indian Empire's involvement, just as we cannot discuss the Middle East without discussing American engagements.

Bharatiya have become an intellectual and cultural authority over non-Bharatiya. This authority must be acknowledged in South Asian, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka studies. The Bharatiya's intellectual position in postcolonial South Asian studies must be interrogated and challenged. Like any authority, there is nothing mysterious or natural about Bharatiya authority. It is constructed and disseminated by power relations. At its heart are yet unexplored but deep racism, segregation, oppression, and arrogance. This authority is highly instrumental, cunning, transformative, and hypocritical.

Why have the non-Bharatiya been provincialized? Why have South Asian departments in western universities provincialized the studies of small countries in the region? We need an emancipatory moment, along with encouragement, to write and read about such provincialization. As the peasant insurgencies in India were understood differently by Europe, colonized societies' struggles have been provincialized as insufficient to warrant attention or as mere expressions of jealousy and malice against India's economic growth. Postcolonial theorists of Indian origin thus provincialize the sufferings of weaker nations on their peripheries. Unless these nations build the capacity to represent themselves beyond Indian imperial perspectives within the region and beyond, they can never escape the provincialization of their colonial situations by the Indian Empire and its proxies. How do we form such a collective, and how can this initiative go beyond a matter of experimentation? I, at least, can say that this is a necessary step for our liberation.

Dipesh Chakrabarty's project of the enunciation of the "political modernity" of South Asia by provincializing modern European political ideas seems redundant to the Fourth World (4). He is blatantly ignorant that India alone does not represent South Asia (except to arrogant patriots), and political modernity cannot begin in South Asia without the destruction of Indian authoritarianism or hegemony. Provincializing Indian colonialism is more urgent than provincializing modern European political ideas. The European enlightenment is not wholly negative, even though its ideas have furnished a superstructure for the imaginary of European colonialists. If one can conceive of the Indian enlightenment as progress, one should critique Indian authoritarianism, even if in doing so, one might find a conflict between one's nationality and the truth. From Homi Bhabha to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, from Dipesh Chakrabarty to Ania Loomba, from Gaura Desai to Leela Gandhi, Indian's colonialism toward its neighbors and its practices, customs, and ideas have been insignificant matters about which to write and read. What faith, then, can we have in the texts of these brownish white people whose loyalty to their own nation blinds them to the historical reality of the colonialism that India imposes on its borders? Those who are victims see provincializing the Indian Empire as more important than provincializing Europe for their political modernity. However, the Fourth World's

provincialization of the Indian Empire should be entirely different than Dipesh Chakrabarty's provincialization. Our provincialization does not start by condemning the other's modernity as an evil. Therefore, I am not sure the word *provincializing* is a useful category in this context.

Postcoloniality enabled Indian domination of South Asia as postindependent or postcolonial nations slipped away from the Eurocentric postcolonialism discourse and engaged in colonial oppression. The postcolonial mode of thought and the formation of political modernity in South Asia should go hand in hand with resistance to Indian colonialism in the region, South Africa's colonial oppression on the African continent, and China's domination in the South China Sea region. Homi Bhabha misses such a project when he defines postcoloniality:

Postcoloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent neo-colonial relations within the 'new' world order and the multi-national division of labour. Such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance. Beyond this, however, postcolonial critique bears witness to those countries and communities—in the North and the South, urban and rural—constituted, if I may coin a phrase, 'otherwise than modernity'. Such cultures of a postcolonial contra-modernity may be contingent to modernity, disconnuous or in connection with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline conditions to 'translate', and therefore, reinscribe, the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity. (6)

Bhabha cites performance artist Guillermo Gomez-Pena's song as an example. Nowhere in the entire book, though, Bhabha understands that moving beyond the intervening moment of the here-and-now within postcolonial nation states involves a critique of postcolonial nations' colonialism in smaller nations. Bhabha relates the here-and-now with the metropolises of the Western world, the hybrid creative performance of Green and Gomez-Pena. The sagas of the Nepali, Kashmiri, and Bhutanese who are the victims of the Indian Empire never rise to Bhabha's consciousness.

Leela Gandhi's defense of democracy as a shared art of living and her postcolonial appeal for an ethics of becoming common are never directed toward the defense of the democracy of the victims in the societies colonized by the Indian Empire. The ethos of Gandhi's ethics is exceptional, but what value does it have for those whose democracy has been taken away by the empire? Such ethics does not fight for them. It does not open a new path for their future.

Following Chakrabarty, Bhabha, and Gandhi, what other sorts of intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and intellectual investments were made in the formation of colonial tradition? How did other enterprises—science, medicine, philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel-writing and poetry—serve colonialist objectives, silencing resistant voices and the imposition of hegemony? What changes, modulations, revisions, and revolution have taken place within the colonial shadow? What have been the meanings of friendship, cooperation, and *roti* (bread) and *beti* (woman) relations? How has colonialism reproduced itself through these ideologies from one epoch to another? Indian colonialism cannot be understood simply as a historical complexity but as the willed colonial work of the empire. The humanistic inquiry that I am doing inevitably relates to politics and culture, but I am not homogenizing colonial rule from one epoch to another. Rather, I am saying that a humanistic investigation of these issues should be directed toward understanding the connection between colonialism and our world.

In conclusion, the essay tries to claim that work on colonized societies in South Asia relates the Bharatiya discourse hidden within which justifies oppression to other works, institutions, practices, and the non-Bharatiya colonized. This interrelation provides a broader view of these complex networks put in place. We cannot explore South Asia without considering the Indian Empire's colonialism toward the weaker, smaller nations along its border and the Bharatiya ideology at the heart of the repressive empire, which is taken to represent the South Asian subcontinent. For readers from literary and cultural studies, Bharatiya is perhaps a worse ideology than Orientalism and gives a glimpse into how society, culture, history, and textuality work around power relations to form a specific form of oppression. For general readers, this essay provides understanding of how the formerly oppressed has become the master and forgotten its worst sufferings. It gives an understanding of how the rising economy of the nation which wishes to be considered the second-biggest democracy on earth has a 'ruthless' colonialism in its heart.

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