



A *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*

TOWARD
A HISTORY
OF THE
VANISHING
PRESENT

Gayatri Chakravorty

*S*PIVAK

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In her first full treatment of postcolonial studies, a field that she helped define, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, one of the world's foremost literary theorists, attempts to describe a responsible role for the postcolonial critic within the postcolonial enclave. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* tracks the figure of the "native informant" through various cultural practices—philosophy, history, literature—to suggest that it emerges as the metropolitan hybrid. The book addresses feminists, philosophers, critics, and interventionist intellectuals as they unite and divide. It ranges from Kant's analytic of the sublime to child labor in Bangladesh.

"This is vintage Spivak—dazzling, exasperating, unfailingly powerful."

—Partha Chatterjee, author of *The Nation and Its Fragments*

"In these pages Gayatri Spivak performs what often seems either impossible or purely gestural—a critique of transnational globalization which manages to be equally attuned to its cultural and economic effects. This book deserves to be read for its modulated defense of Marxism and feminism alone. It will be welcomed as the clearest statement to date of Spivak's own relationship to the postcolonial theory with which she herself—wrongly, as she forcefully argues here—is so often identified. With a brilliance that is uniquely hers, Spivak issues a challenge which will be very hard to avoid to the limits of theory and of academic institutions alike."

—Jacqueline Rose, author of *States of Fantasy* and *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*

"Gayatri Spivak tells us that here she charts her progress from colonial discourse studies to transnational cultural studies. She constructs this extraordinary progress through an intricate labyrinth, but one with blazing lights in every corner."

—Saskia Sassen, author of *Globalization and Its Discontents*

"Gayatri Spivak works with remarkable complexity and skill to evoke the local details of emergent agency in an international frame. Her extraordinary attention to the texts she reads and her ability to track the reach of global power make her one of the unparalleled intellectuals of our time."

—Judith Butler, author of *The Psychic Life of Power*

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is the Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University and the author of many books, including *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*.

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