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Emily Rook-Koepse Ph.D.
University of Oklahoma, emilyrk@ou.edu

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Gyanendra Pandey (Ed.). *Subalternity and Difference: Investigations from the North and the South*. London: Routledge. 2011.

In a new edited volume, Gyanendra Pandey has brought together scholars of both the global south and the global north, with essays focusing in particular on India, Ecuador, the United States, and Britain, to consider the strong connection between the politics of subalternity and the politics of difference. This is the second collaborative volume from scholars from the United States and India, the first being *Subaltern Citizens and their Histories: Investigations from India and the USA* also published by Routledge in their Intersections series. In the preface and the introduction to the current collection, Pandey suggests that the collaboration between scholars was meant to address the question of how to think about the politics inherent to descriptions and claims of difference, particularly as difference begins to be defined less categorically (ix-x, 4). More specifically, the articles were organized around the intersection of *subalternity*, which Pandey describes as the state of being simultaneously integral to and excluded from one's own context, and *difference*. Thus, Pandey and the contributors to this volume place the defining of the "dalit/black/woman" (5) at the heart of the analysis of the politics of naming and inhabiting difference and subalternity. The book's introduction, written by Pandey, brilliantly lays out the theoretical frame of the text, situating the authors' theoretical questions within subaltern studies and the politics of difference. Pandey's introduction also points to the ways in which the concepts of subalternity and difference are necessarily part of understanding the global north and the global south. The introduction offers an example of the kinds of connections that can be made when scholars from different geographic contexts consider similar theoretical questions by quickly placing a reading of dalit positionality in India and black women's place in the United States in conversation with one another. Pandey, whose essay in the volume body does a close reading of an unpublished autobiography by a southern black woman, Viola Andrews, is better known for his scholarship on questions of difference, violence, and minority in India. His introduction offers a provocative sense of the insights about the politics of difference that can be achieved when we read across geographic and disciplinary boundaries.

The main body of the book is organized into three sections of three essays, each of which considers a specific intersection between subalternity and difference. The first section considers gender, sexuality, and the body of difference; the second, the production of a subaltern identity that belongs or engages but does not assimilate; and the third, the construction of liberal articulations of difference. Each section includes essays about the global north and the global south in order to examine the main theoretical themes of the project: how subalternity and difference are 'made' and elided, how these categories are fought for and fought against by the people who inhabit them, and how difference has been used to either fight for or deny subaltern citizens access to structures of power. This kind of organization allows the reader to think through the theme of the section in several different contexts while still grounding each individual essay in a particular area or literature.

Although the introduction does an excellent job of presenting the theoretical frame, the essays can feel a little disjointed at times. For example, the three essays in the first section by Dilip K. Das, Colin R. Johnson, and Ruth Vanita, are all excellent in their analyses of gender and political difference, but because they each take place in distinct times and places (present day India, 1970s California, and 18th and early 19th century urban India) and address the theme from

different disciplinary and theoretical concerns, it is hard to make the connections between the three articles as clearly or effectively as might have been possible with more structural support. The structural problem, in some ways, undermines the project of reading these themes together and would have been helped by short, structural introductions to each section, stronger structural analysis in the introduction, or a concluding essay to the volume.

One of the more ambitious aspects of *Subalternity and Difference* is the attempt to introduce, in a limited way, a 'kindred' scholarship across time, place, and disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, as a scholar of modern South Asian history, some of the essays I found most intriguing were those that considered the issues in places far removed from my usual stomping ground but which nonetheless resonated usefully with my research and teaching. Colin R. Johnson's essay, "'Homosexuals from Haystacks': Gay Liberation and the Spector of a Queer Majority in Rural California, circa 1970," considered the aborted plan by San Francisco's Gay Liberation Front to "invade" California's sparsely populated Alpine County and create the first (and only) gay majority county. The essay effectively takes this footnote of history and uses it to think about political equality, majority, minority, and social difference (42). With effective narrative story-telling, an engaging cast of characters, and theoretical savvy, this essay should be interesting not only for scholars of the politics of minority and difference in many different contexts but also for students.

Another exemplary essay, located in the third section of the book, is Christopher Krupa's "Mestizo Mainstream: Reaffirmations of Natural Citizenship in Ecuador." Krupa's argument, that Mestizo groups in Ecuador, long the vision of the "natural" citizen, successfully co-opted the protest tactics of the indigenous population to reinscribe and reinforce their claim to unmarked political citizenship (150-151). Krupa's argument about "the inherently unstable nature of the category of 'citizen'" (150) clearly resonates with many of the other essays in the book, especially Prathama Bannerjee's essay on the 19th century equality debates in Bengal and Mary E. Odem's essay on Mayan immigrant organizations in present day Georgia.

Many of the essays in this collection would be extremely valuable to teach with, as they analyze difficult concepts like political equality, citizenship, and difference concisely and with clarity. American students would definitely benefit from Mary E. Odem's essay "Indigenous Immigrants, Religion, and the Struggle for Belonging in the United States," which outlines tactics that Mayan immigrants, both documented and undocumented, have used to create a contingent community in the United States that represents the needs and benefits of the community and challenges the community's political and cultural status of exclusion in the United States (98). Dilip K. Das's essay, "At Risk: Gender, Sexuality, and Epidemic Logic" uses the representation of HIV in India as a case study to understand how disease "subjects" individual bodies to the Indian State while excluding them from what he calls "subjecthood" (24). Das's analysis considers both the construction of communities based on HIV positive status, but also the way that the Indian state sought to define groups of people, like prostitutes or truck drivers, already marked by difference and made subaltern in India, as the vector for the disease, the 'at-risk' population (32). Both of these essays work for students because they address their subject in context—but do so in a way that remains accessible to the non-expert audience. Other essays in the collection, like Ruth Vanita's essay on Rekhti's poetry, do seem to require a bit more in-depth knowledge of the subject to be valuable, but for the academic interested in these issues, the essays would be extremely compelling. Indeed, for the most part, the essays about India, with the possible exception of the Das essay, tended to be pitched to a slightly different, more specialized, audience than the essays about the Americas.

On the whole, this is a valuable collection of essays for scholars interested in ideas of minority, citizenship, difference, race, and gender. The essays each offer a suggestion regarding how to work with a politics of difference. Additionally, the sections offer some insight into the kinds of questions the intersection of difference and subalternity raises, including questions of gender and sexuality as defining features, belonging or not belonging within communities and nations, and the liberal democratic politics that create and reinforce positions of minority and subalternity. Scholars and teachers with an interest in these issues can look to this volume for several valuable essays, and they may do so with a hope that this volume will serve as the one of many attempting the kind of comparisons it begins to make.

Emily Rook-Koepsel, Ph.D.
University of Oklahoma
emilyrk@ou.edu