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Shuhita Bhattacharjee, Postsecular Theory

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Postsecular Theory

Texts and Contexts

Shuhita Bhattacharjee

Of particular relevance in the current global political climate, this volume reviews and investigates ‘Postsecular Theory’ as a well-established field of critical inquiry. It discusses the complexity of arguing for faith’s centrality to human experience at a time when institutionalized faith systems are barraging human rights frameworks around the world. The book examines how the historical lineage of these injustices can be traced all the way back not to religion but to Western colonialist commercial hegemonies. It models at length what postsecular literary analyses may look like with respect to works from the long nineteenth and twenty first centuries.

At the heart of the book is the section on nineteenth-century literature that has three chapters on Victorian New Woman fiction, fin-de-siecle scientific romances, and Anglo-Indian colonial novels. Examining works from an age that was then and is still considered to be the harbinger of ‘secular’ modernity, these chapters show how the nineteenth-century texts illustrate a definitive transition—the construction of the ‘secular’ from within the religious—while offering a gendered, colonial and racialised understanding of these concepts during a phase of high imperialism. Towards the end, the volume discusses the dilemmas of transnational feminism, religion, and human rights in the context of modern graphic novels such as Marjane Satrapi's Iranian graphic novel *Persepolis*.

Shuhita Bhattacharjee is Assistant Professor of Literature and Gender Studies in the Department of Liberal Arts, and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Design, at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad.

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