



Toward a Politics of the (Im)Possible

The Body in Third World Feminisms

Anirban Das

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Description

Presents a philosophical discussion on the issues of the body and knowledge from a feminist perspective.

'Anirban Das's work is an important contribution to contemporary discussions on the post-colonial subject. It views some of the vital questions that confront the third world, especially its women, from a wide range of theoretical perspectives deeply analyzed and philosophically nuanced.' —*Franson Manjali, Professor, Centre of Linguistics and English, Jawaharlal Nehru University*

'Expansive, rigorous and lucid, 'Toward a Politics of the (Im)Possible' offers a significant contribution to ongoing debates on the body, gender and identity. Through a series of meticulous and ambitious readings, the book brings together theoretical work and a sense of location in unique ways.' —*Udaya Kumar, Professor, Department of English, University of Delhi*

This volume works at the intersection of two related yet different fields. One is the heterogeneous feminist effort to question universal forms of knowing. The expression 'embodiment of knowledge' deploys the notions of time (as history), space (as location) and politics (as partiality of perspective or standpoint) to interrogate the purported universality of knowing. Embodiment is one important concept through which feminist philosophies try to perceive the attempt of questioning the universal. The second field follows from mind/body dichotomy. Embodiment is traditionally understood to involve an act of simple inversion – valorising the (material) body in place of the mind. However, if meanings are seen to produce the body as 'a system of signification', embodiment gets reduced to another form of the signifiatory mechanism. The book explored the dynamics of the production of the 'body' with a focus on the 'others' (death, sexual and colonial differences) that fracture and define the notion of the body. An ethical responsibility to the 'others' consonant with this ontologically differentiated body distinguishes this notion of embodiment from standard versions of 'third world feminism'. The development of this notion requires an elaboration of the ways in which power and scientific rationality work (epistemically) in a postcolonial setting. Finally, ***Toward a Politics of the (Im)Possible*** presents the notion of embodied knowledges as inseparable from a deconstructive politics of the (im)possible.

Readership: This book will interest students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, researchers, activist groups and individuals working in the field of women's issues.

Contents

Introduction; 1. Body, Power and Ideology [Introduction; Question of Power – the Hierarchical Constitution of Subjects; Ideology and Spectral Embodiment]; 2. Thinking the Body: Metaphoricity of the Corporeal [Introduction; The Body, Thingness and Ideologies; Actuality and (Im)Possibility: Descartes/Foucault/Derrida; 'The Woman in the Body' – Metaphors of Embodiment; Beyond Performativity: Universals and Other Generalities]; 3. Thinking the Body – Negotiating the Other/Death [Introduction; Medicine: Making up the Normal; The Body in Death: Beyond the Post/Modern; Dying and the Dasein: Towards an Ontology of Death; From Ontology to Ethics: Embodying Death]; 4. Thinking the Body – Beyond the *Topos* of Man [Introduction; The *Woman* in Ontological Difference; Property Talks: the (Non)Space of the *Name*; Figuring Sexual Difference: Multiple Singularities; Yashobati's Story – *Maya* in a Trace-Structure]; 5. Violence and Responsibility: Embodied Feminisms [Introduction; Third World Feminisms: The Politics of Location and Experience; Eating Others – An Inquiry into the Notions of Iterability and Responsibility]; In Conclusion: Toward a Politics of the (Im)Possible

About the Author

Anirban Das holds a PhD in Philosophy from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. He is currently a Fellow in Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, India.

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