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Vivek Chibber

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*"The book we were all waiting for, a burst of fresh air dispelling the stale
aroma of the pseudo-radical academic establishment." Slavoj Žižek*

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Vivek Chibber : Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Phenomenal Book from an Essential Thinker By Nathan D. Backlund This is one of the most exciting and interesting political books I have ever read. I very much enjoyed Chibber's previous book Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India, but he has taken it to a new level. Not only did I get a devastating critique of Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Theory, but I got a great

history lesson about the English and French revolutions, and also the capitalist development of India. Don't listen to the haters who say this book isn't really directed at post-colonial studies because Chibber didn't specifically discuss their favorite academic crackpot. Any possible theoretical contribution that the postcolonial academic enterprise has produced is annihilated in great detail. All the stuff about East and West, and paying attention to difference and the marginal, and how Marxism is Eurocentric, etc. Chibber is lot nicer than I'm being and I think is very fair to the people he critiques. OK I'm biased but read it for yourself. I have read and listened to the responses of many his critics. Bottom line is they can't attack him on the actual evidence. Chibber is easily the most important voice to have emerged on the academic left in some time. He is a great writer and speaker and this book is his latest, but I'm sure not last, tour-de-force.³ of 6 people found the following review helpful. On *Orientalist Ideology* By Shawn Parkhurst Chibber makes a compelling case that much of Subaltern Studies purveys Orientalist ideology (whether wittingly or not). The book takes its subject seriously. It is written with critical, and devastating, respect. It pushes Marxist analysis back to its roots and in new directions. I am very glad I read it.⁷ of 9 people found the following review helpful. *Subaltern-speak* By James R Newlin Bruce Robbins has a review on n+1: The target of Chibber's polemic is not postcolonial theory as a whole, about which he says almost nothing. (Verso should have asked him to drop the portentously inaccurate title.) His target is Subaltern Studies, the field created by a group of left-wing historians of South Asia who began publishing in the early 1980s. The Subalterns--represented in Chibber's book by Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Partha Chatterjee, and who also include David Arnold, Gyanendra Pandey, and Shahid Amin, among others (Gayatri Spivak is a sort of fellow traveler)--wrote from within Marxism but against what Chakrabarty called the "deep-seated, crude materialism of the `matter over mind' variety" implicitly attributed to orthodox Marxism. Crude materialism, these historians argued, did not give enough credit to the culture, consciousness, or experience of India's poorest. There was also an immediate political context that spurred the historiographic question. In the late 1960s and '70s, India's most oppressed had risen up in what came to be known as the Naxalite insurgency, and received less than full-throated support from the established Marxist parties. When Guha and Chatterjee researched peasant revolts against colonial officials and landlords or strikes in Calcutta's jute mills, they were calling attention to a resistant agency for which even the anticolonial left seemed unable or unwilling to find a proper place. read the whole thing here.....[...]

Postcolonial theory has become enormously influential as a framework for understanding the Global South. It is also a school of thought popular because of its rejection of the supposedly universalizing categories of the Enlightenment. In this devastating critique, mounted on behalf of the radical Enlightenment tradition, Vivek Chibber offers the most comprehensive response yet to postcolonial theory. Focusing on the hugely popular Subaltern Studies project, Chibber shows that its foundational arguments are based on a series of analytical and historical misapprehensions. He demonstrates that it is possible to affirm a universalizing theory without succumbing to Eurocentrism or reductionism. *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* promises to be a historical milestone in contemporary social theory.

With its focus on cultural identities and mixtures, postcolonial theory ignored the larger context of capitalist relations and thus limited its scope to Western academia where it excelled in the game of growing and profiting from the liberal guilt feeling. Chibber's book simply sets the record straight, bringing postcolonialism down from cultural heights to where it belongs, into the very heart of global capitalist processes. The book we were all waiting for, a burst of fresh air dispelling the stale aroma of pseudo-radical academic establishment. Slavoj Žižek In this scrupulous and perceptive analysis, Vivek Chibber successfully shows that the universalizing categories of Enlightenment thought emerge unscathed from the criticisms of postcolonial theorists. He shows further that perhaps ironically Subaltern Studies greatly underestimates the role of subaltern agency in bringing about the transformations that they attribute to the European bourgeoisie. Chibber's analysis also provides a very valuable account of the actual historical sociology of modern European development, of Indian peasant mobilization and activism, and much else. It is a very significant contribution. Noam Chomsky In this outstanding work a model of clarity in its architecture and argumentation key theorists of the Subaltern and of postcoloniality have met their most formidable interlocutor and critic yet. Chibber's critique of postcolonial theory and the historical sociological studies associated with it is, at the same time, a vigorous and welcome defense of the enduring value of certain Enlightenment universals as an analytical framework to both understand and radically change the world we live in. Achin Vanaik Vivek Chibber has written a stunning critique of postcolonial theory as represented by the Subaltern Studies school. While eschewing all polemics, he shows that their project is undermined by their paradoxical acceptance of an essentially liberal-Whig interpretation of the bourgeois revolutions and capitalist development in the West, which provides the foundation for their fundamental assertion of the difference of the East. Through a series of painstaking empirical and conceptual studies Chibber proceeds to overturn the central pillars of the Subalternists framework, while sustaining the credibility of Enlightenment theories. It is a bravura performance that cannot help but shake up our intellectual and political landscape. Robert Brenner *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* is a must-read book for students of comparative politics and

social theory. Vivek Chibber presents a forceful challenge to the Subaltern Studies school and to postcolonial theory more broadly. Arguing with great clarity, Chibber raises fundamental objections to their ideas about capitalism, power, and agency, and presents an alternative account of these ideas. Most fundamentally, he rejects the fundamental division between East and West associated with postcolonial theory and defends the universalizing categories of Enlightenment thought. This is a major contribution that is bound to reshape debate on these important issues. Joshua Cohen

In this book, Vivek Chibber has carried out a thoroughgoing dissection of Subaltern Studies. Like a highly skilled anatomist, he lays bare the skeleton, the nervous system, the arteries and veins of this school ... In the process the reader is also exposed to the nitty-gritty of a materialist historiography. Amiya Kumar Bagchi

About the Author Vivek Chibber is Associate Professor of Sociology at New York University. He has contributed to, among others, the Socialist Register, American Journal of Sociology, Boston and New Left . His book Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India won the 2005 Barrington Moore Book Award and was one of Choices Outstanding Academic Titles of 2004.