

(RE)WRITING THE MARGINS

Edited by
Aparna Singh



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Charting the Un/Common Terrain: Re-Cast(ing) Ambedkarian 'Annihilation' of Gandhian Reform

Shaweta Nanda

"To have excised Ambedkar from Gandhi's story... is a travesty. Equally, to ignore Gandhi while writing about Ambedkar is to do Ambedkar a disservice because Gandhi loomed over Ambedkar's world in myriad and un-wonderful ways. — Arundhati Roy

While Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's (1891-1956) activism caught attention, his writings have often been marginalized and ignored. The paper proceeds to examine how certain dichotomies such as distinction between national and anti-national perspective(s) have been carefully constructed by the dominant Brahminical-bourgeois discourse in order to vilify Ambedkar and deny him a rightful place in India's political hagiography.¹ The paper intends to approach Ambedkar through the lens of his writings such as *What Gandhi and Congress have Done to the Untouchables* (1945). The paper analyzes Ambedkar's arguments concerning the positions adopted by the Indian National Congress and M.K Gandhi (1896-1948) about the question of the Untouchables.² In addition to analyzing Ambedkar as an anti-caste intellectual, I wish to re-view Ambedkar as a post-colonial thinker despite the fact that he has often been overlooked by the paradigm of post-colonial studies.³ While charting Ambedkar's intellectual and political differences with Gandhi, I wish to deploy the theoretical framework of "exploration of politics of experience" as opposed to "the ethics of theorizing" (224) as propounded by Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukkai. I wish to stress how Ambedkar tries to formulate a theory based on his experience as an Untouchable. His confrontation with Gandhi in the Round Table Conference (1931-32), and the subsequent Poona Pact (1932) fueled his growth as a thinker and activist. This argument is furthered by my reference to Gopal Guru's conception of the "rejection of rejection" (209) in Ambedkar's politics. The paper seeks to examine the manner in which Ambedkar and Gandhi adopted different approaches concerning the central problems of the

Re-Framing Hottentot: Liberating Black Female Sexuality from the Mammy/Hottentot Bind

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Abstract

Taking up Michele Wallace's call to interrogate popular cultural forms and unravel their relationship with the political discourse of the time, this paper begins by examining the popular discourse about Black female sexuality in the USA. White, cis-hetero-patriarchal cultural and visual imagination still represents Black women either as asexual and maternal mummies or as the deviant 'Other' that is as Venus Hottentots or 'hypersexual' Jezebels. Maternal and sexual scripts were first naturalized by popular and scientific discourse(s), and then covertly deployed by the dominant white hetero-patriarchal set up to mask the exploitation of Black women, and constrict the opportunities of growth that were available to them even after the emancipation. This paper analyzes how Black women writers like Elizabeth Alexander and Alice Walker, and visual artists such as Renee Cox develop an oppositional gaze, to use hooks's phrase, and 're-frame' the Venus Hottentot from their radical and subversive points of view. Building on theoretical insights of Gina Dent, Cornel West, and Audre Lorde, this paper engages with the oft-neglected relationship between pleasure, desire, identity, and Black female sexuality. Thus, Black female sexuality that has been expunged and/or termed 'deviant' actually becomes a source of empowerment for Black women. [View Full-Text](#)

Keywords: Venus Hottentot; Jezebel; Mammy; Alice Walker; Elizabeth Alexander; Thylas Moss; Renee Cox; Black female sexuality; female circumcision; black photography; Saartjee Baartman

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