Affective Communities
Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship

LEELA GANDHI

Affective Communities

ANTICOLONIAL THOUGHT,

FIN-DE-SIÈCLE RADICALISM,

AND THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP
“If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.” So E. M. Forster famously observed in his *Two Cheers for Democracy*. Forster’s epigrammatic manifesto, where the idea of the “friend” stands as a metaphor for dissident cross-cultural collaboration, holds the key, Leela Gandhi argues in *Affective Communities*, to the hitherto neglected history of western anti-imperialism. Focusing on individuals and groups who renounced the privileges of imperialism to elect affinity with victims of their own expansionist cultures, she uncovers the utopian-socialist critiques of empire that emerged in Europe, specifically in Britain, at the end of the nineteenth century. Gandhi reveals for the first time how those associated with marginalized lifestyles, subcultures, and traditions—including homosexuality, vegetarianism, animal rights, spiritualism, and aestheticism—united against imperialism and forged strong bonds with colonized subjects and cultures. Gandhi weaves together the stories of a number of South Asian and European friendships that flourished between 1878 and 1914, tracing the complex historical networks connecting figures like the English socialist and homosexual reformer Edward Carpenter and the young Indian barrister M. K. Gandhi, or the Jewish French mystic Mirra Alfassa and the Cambridge-educated Indian yogi and extremist Sri Aurobindo. In a global milieu where the battle lines of empire are reemerging in newer and more pernicious configurations, *Affective Communities* challenges homogeneous portrayals of “the West” and its role in relation to anticolonial struggles. Drawing on Derrida’s theory of friendship, Gandhi puts forth a powerful new model of the political: one that finds in friendship a crucial resource for anti-imperialism and transnational collaboration.

*Praise*

“Affective Communities is an ambitious attempt to rethink the impact and legacy of the utopian socialism that had its heyday in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century. . . . Gandhi is a subtle, incisive critic of philosophy, and the strongest sections of the book are her lucid, authoritative treatments of Derrida, Foucault, Kant, Hegel, Nancy, and others.” — Gautam Premnath, *Journal of British Studies*

“Affective Communities is an important book that challenges the founding principles of postcolonial theory not in order to reject its ambitions but to open new ways to approach these urgent issues. . . . This book is hard to put down, but it also invites frequent rereading as a guide and as a reformulation of the theoretically and politically complex terrain of anti-colonial and postcolonial theorising.” — Linnell Secomb, *Postcolonial Studies*

“I admire the passion, integrity, and brilliance with which [Gandhi] makes her case. . . . This is a book to be savoured for its suggestive insights. . . . Its intellectual energy derives . . . from Gandhi’s inventive retrieval and analysis of forgotten texts . . . .” — Seth Koven, *The International History Review*
Leela Gandhi teaches at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She is the author of *Postcolonialism: A Critical Introduction*, a coauthor of *England in Twentieth-Century Fiction: Through Colonial Eyes*, and a coeditor of the journal *Postcolonial Studies*.

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Surrogate Humanity
'Affective communities' can be understood to be forms of community distinguished by widely-held and collectively understood forms of feeling. This means that the respective community is constituted – and to an extent unified, at least temporarily – through shared patterns of emotional meaning and understanding. Affective communities can take shape and be mobilized at all political levels, from the local to the national and the global. There are a range of examples. This book investigates how 'affective communities' emerge after trauma. Drawing on several case studies and an unusually broad set of interdisciplinary sources, it examines the role played by representations, from media images to historical narratives and political speeches. Representations of traumatic events are crucial because they generate socially embedded emotional meanings which, in turn, enable direct victims and distant translations in context of "affected communities" in English-Russian from Reverso Context: communities affected, conflict-affected communities, mine-affected communities. These examples may contain rude words based on your search. These examples may contain colloquial words based on your search. Translation of "affected communities" in Russian. Search affected communities in: Web. Images.