



# Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy (Cultures of History)

By Partha Chatterjee



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Partha Chatterjee, a pioneering theorist, is known for his wide disciplinary range, incorporating the concerns of South Asian studies, postcolonialism, the social sciences, and the humanities with remarkable dexterity. His versatility made his early work, *Politics of the Governed*, a widespread hit, and it continues to draw audiences in an era of genre-defying, globalized scholarship.

Building on his theory of "political society," first developed in his *Politics of the Governed*, and reinforcing its salience to contemporary political debate, Chatterjee broadly critiques the past three hundred years of western political theory—including postcolonial studies, comparative history, and our current understanding of contemporary politics—to address a fundamental issue: can democracy be brought into being, or even fought for, in the image of Western democracy as it exists today? Through the example of postcolonial societies and their political evolution, particularly in India, Chatterjee challenges the certainty of liberal democratic theory, presenting a more realist view of its achievements and limitations. Rather than push an alternative theory (for Chatterjee resists all prejudices and preformed judgments), he rests solely within the realm of critique, seeking instead to prove political difference is not always evidence of philosophical and cultural backwardness outside of the West.

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#### Review

Partha Chatterjee is one of the most important writers and theorists of our time, a voice as fresh and original as it is powerful and necessary. (Nicholas Dirks, Columbia University, author of *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain*)

A fascinating look at international politics and the reality of democracy through the world. (*The Midwest Book Review*)

#### About the Author

Partha Chatterjee is honorary professor of political science at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and professor of anthropology at Columbia University. His books include *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays*; *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*; *A Possible India: Essays in Political Criticism*; and *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*.

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