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The Intimacies of Four Continents

By Lisa Lowe



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The Intimacies of Four Continents By Lisa Lowe

In this uniquely interdisciplinary work, Lisa Lowe examines the relationships between Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- centuries, exploring the links between colonialism, slavery, imperial trades and Western liberalism. Reading across archives, canons, and continents, Lowe connects the liberal narrative of freedom overcoming slavery to the expansion of Anglo-American empire, observing that abstract promises of freedom often obscure their embeddedness within colonial conditions. Race and social difference, Lowe contends, are enduring remainders of colonial processes through which “the human” is universalized and “freed” by liberal forms, while the peoples who create the conditions of possibility for that freedom are assimilated or forgotten. Analyzing the archive of liberalism alongside the colonial state archives from which it has been separated, Lowe offers new methods for interpreting the past, examining events well documented in archives, and those matters absent, whether actively suppressed or merely deemed insignificant. Lowe invents a mode of reading intimately, which defies accepted national boundaries and disrupts given chronologies, complicating our conceptions of history, politics, economics, and culture, and ultimately, knowledge itself.



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The Intimacies of Four Continents By Lisa Lowe Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"*The Intimacies of Four Continents* is an unprecedented work of literary, social, and political inquiry. Lisa Lowe patiently interweaves disparate global histories of economic and racial subjection and in the process opens up a new future for comparative literary studies both more critical and capacious. At stake in Lowe's analysis is not only a rethinking of the relation between the political and the aesthetic, but also the very ideas of culture and universality that has come to dominate academic thought."

(Judith Butler, author of *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*)

"Lowe combines a sustained and critical interrogation of some key archival, literary, and philosophical texts with a probing analysis of the entangled histories of settler-colonialism, African slave trade, and trade in Asian goods and peoples in the Americas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The outcome is nothing short of a world-history of liberal thought that pays unwavering attention to the coercive and discriminatory practices that make such thought possible. This is 'history of the present' in the best sense of that expression; it troubles our most familiar and intimate assumptions. A serious and remarkable achievement."

(Dipesh Chakrabarty, coeditor of *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*)

"This is a challenging book, which should be read by all those interested in the history of capitalism and the formation of the social sciences. ...There is much to enjoy in each of these chapters, especially, the dialectical interweaving of liberal conceptions and their negation, and the careful delineation of context and claim. Ultimately, however, the book is a dissection of liberalism and its fractured and fracturing presence in the modern world."

(John Holmwood *Theory, Culture & Society* 2015-11-04)

"Lisa Lowe's ambitious new book is a reminder of the deft footwork now required of anyone attempting to negotiate this tricky terrain. In *The Intimacies of Four Continents* she aligns herself with postcolonial scholars like Ann Laura Stoler, Antoinette Burton, or Nayan Shah who have each provided a distinctive take on how 'the "intimate" sphere of sexual, reproductive, or household relations' served as 'a site of empire'."

(David Glover *New Formations* 2016-03-01)

"[An] important asset to anyone interested in not just themes of colonialism, labour, trade, and slavery, and of Chinese Canadian prairie history respectively, but also critical methodologies—of how to read intimately for relations between people and communities and in relation across time and space—in order to grasp the possibilities of knowing that lie among what has been assumed unknowable, erased, or forgotten."

(Stephanie Fung *Canadian Literature* 2016-10-17)

"Among the many fascinating contributions of the book, I found one of the most arresting to be Lowe's suggestion in her voluminous discursive footnotes that contemporary neoliberalism, with its emphasis on 'human capital' around the world, needs to be linked with its prehistory of racialized commodification of people. For that insight alone, Lowe's panoramic study is more than worth reading."

(Samuel Moyn *Canadian Journal of History* 2016-11-07)

"Reading *The Intimacies of Four Continents* will change the way we look at global (and national) histories forever."

(Etsuko Taketani *Journal of American History* 2016-11-21)

"*The Intimacies of Four Continents* will undoubtedly remain a touchstone text for those working...and struggling against those operations that continue to pronounce colonial divisions of humanity at once globally and in their local, regional, and differential instantiations."
(Hossein Ayazi *Qui Parle* 2016-12-05)

About the Author

Lisa Lowe is Professor of English and American Studies at Tufts University. She is the author of *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* and the coeditor of *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, both also published by Duke University Press.

Users Review

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Playing with family within a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love The Intimacies of Four Continents, you may enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

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