



# **Alimentary Tracts: Appetites, Aversions, and the Postcolonial (Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies)**

*Parama Roy*

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In *Alimentary Tracts* Parama Roy argues that who eats and with whom, who starves, and what is rejected as food are questions fundamental to empire, decolonization, and globalization. In crucial ways, she suggests, colonialism reconfigured the sensorium of colonizer and colonized, generating novel experiences of desire, taste, and appetite as well as new technologies of the embodied self. For colonizers, Indian nationalists, diasporic persons, and others in the colonial and postcolonial world orders, the alimentary tract functioned as an important corporeal, psychoaffective, and ethicopolitical contact zone, in which questions of identification, desire, difference, and responsibility were staged.

Interpreting texts that have addressed cooking, dining, taste, hungers, excesses, and aversions in South Asia and its diaspora since the mid-nineteenth century, Roy relates historical events and literary figures to tropes of disgust, abstention, dearth, and appetite. She analyzes the fears of pollution and deprivation conveyed in British accounts of the so-called Mutiny of 1857, complicates understandings of Mohandas K. Gandhi's vegetarianism, examines the "famine fictions" of the novelist-actor Mahasweta Devi, and reflects on the diasporic cookbooks and screen performances of Madhur Jaffrey. This account of richly visceral global modernity furnishes readers with a new idiom for understanding historical action and cultural transformation.

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