



Imaginary Maps

By Mahasweta Devi

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Imaginary Maps presents three stories from noted Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi in conjunction with readings of these tales by famed cultural and literary critic, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Weaving history, myth and current political realities, these stories explore troubling motifs in contemporary Indian life through the figures and narratives of indigenous tribes in India. At once delicate and violent, Devi's stories map the experiences of the "tribals" and tribal life under decolonization. In "The Hunt," "Douloti the Bountiful" and the deftly wrought allegory of tribal agony "Pterodactyl, Pirtha, and Puran Sahay," Ms. Devi links the specific fate of tribals in India to that of marginalized peoples everywhere.

Gayatri Spivak's readings of these stories connect the necessary "power lines" within them, not only between local and international structures of power (patriarchy, nationalisms, late capitalism), but also to the university.

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Imaginary Maps By Mahasweta Devi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The author of several novels, Devi is best known in India, especially in her native Bengal (Bangladesh). In this collection of three powerful stories, she exposes the conditions of tribal peoples in India. Some readers will not like her journalistic style, but U.S. and Canadian readers will find many painful parallels to Native American fiction in Devi's stories. These three focus on the surviving bonded labor system and its deleterious effects on men and women. In "The Hunt," Devi highlights the role of women resisting not only the destruction of the environment and tribal traditions but also the exploitation of women in postcolonial India. Translator Spivak has published two of Devi's other stories in her collection of essays, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987). *Imaginary Maps* features an interview with Devi and Spivak's critical commentary, which is unfortunately not for beginners. Recommended for more scholarly collections.

- *Faye A. Chadwell, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia*

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Review

" . . . when the world is broadly divided simply into North and South, the World Bank has no barrier to its division of that world into a map that is as fantastic as it is real. This constantly changing map draws economic rather than national boundaries, as fluid as the spectacular dynamics of international capital.."

-Gayatri Spivak, from "Imaginary Maps"

From the Back Cover

Weaving history, myth and current political realities, these three stories by noted Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi explore troubling motifs in contemporary Indian life through the figures and narratives of the indigenous tribes of India. Both delicate and violent, Devi's stories map the experiences of the 'tribals' and tribal life under decolonization.

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