

The book being a *revised* reprint in English, some sections have been modified and the last appendix has been added, which for sure is an asset. On the other hand, I do regret the extreme shortening (in Part I) of the discussion on timber, the draught animals and the conditions of transport. Although not resulting in a clear solution to the issue of the distribution of various types of carriages in different provinces, the discussion still contained some interesting data, which are missing here. Further, one wonders to what extent the bibliography has been updated, and likewise some of the statements: are the very archaic carts still, in 2016, used in India? Or did they make way for more modern inventions. Last but not least, the title is a little misleading, implying that the study includes motor vehicles as well, which, obviously, is not the case. Nevertheless, Deloche's book is a solid study that will certainly be of use to historians, anthropologists and art historians alike.

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PURNIMA MANKEKAR:

Unsettling India: Affect, Temporality, Transnationality.

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Unsettling India is an unusual book – and it should not be. Mankekar moves fluidly throughout the text between India and its diasporic loci, seeing the two as inter-linked and mutually influential, thus producing a rare text that sits equally comfortably in Asian and Asian-American studies. Mankekar does not merely cover this important, non-contiguous territory, but also brings in a vital theoretical grounding in affect theory. Drawing particularly from Lauren Berlant and Katie Stewart, Mankekar crafts new techniques for looking at how gendered bodies navigate making new meanings of home in moments of unsettlement.

The sophisticated theoretical apparatus developed in the introduction of the book is cast into concrete scenarios in subsequent chapters that investigate the diverse areas in which “Indianness” is produced and circulated. In “Moving images”, the “site” is the movie *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ)*, which Mankekar uses to explore tropes of land and authenticity as well as the affective effects of the film on subjects in California and India. She develops an understanding of the collective experience of this film, noting how its value as an emotional touchstone grows through its circulation and how *DDLJ* offers both middle-class Indian and diasporic Bay Area viewers a space to define “Indianness”. The “Indian culture” Mankekar sees being co-produced takes on a sensory character in the smells and sounds of the Indian markets of California, which are seen as places “suitable” for women that provide the tools to cook “proper” Indian food. Through such consumptive acts, a nostalgia for that which never was is produced, one that forces selective forgettings in order to create a phantasmic India. In doing so, many assumptions about skin colour, and values of family and work are (re)produced, in ways that often blind diasporic consumers to issues of class and race that surround them. Mankekar fruitfully notes that Indian grocery stores construct “India as an archive of affect and temporality” (p. 105) that occludes many differences and tensions within the existing Indian diaspora and creates a homogenous “India” that is everywhere and nowhere.

While there is significant literature on the co-production of new media and new consumer desire in South Asia, Mankekar seeks to explore the silences and unspeakable erotics, especially for women, that are entailed in contemporary desires for goods. Wanting women can become wanton women, and threaten to lose their “Indianness”. Using television series and commercials, Mankekar unpacks the ways in which sex and money are linked as desirable and dangerous, for both an emergent middle class and the diaspora. At the intersection of diaspora and home, Mankekar is pointing to a new way of thinking about mobility, one that observes the power of non-resident Indians (NRIs) in the construction of Indian fashion and politics, but in a dialectic with the homeland, allowing elites in India to share in the production and consumption of this new “Global India”.

What I find particularly brave and compelling about this book is that Mankekar does not limit her analysis to realms of consumer desire and media dissemination, but sees these as part and parcel of changing politics in South Asia and beyond. Perhaps prescient of Narendra Modi’s “dream of a digital India” – an image promoted widely in the Bay Area community that is one of Mankekar’s research “sites” – the book suggests the ways in which “tradition” is (re)mobilized for political ends. The prescriptive morality that is pressed upon women of “Global India” is unsettling to Mankekar. It is a dehistoricized tradition that aims not at recreating a better past, but at producing a futurity that threatens all who do not conform to an imagined Hindutva ideal. This “aspirational India” impinges upon many, regardless of their location. Through an analysis of *Bunty aur Babli*, Mankekar examines how the demands for impersonation placed upon call centre workers are part of a larger pattern of desire and neoliberal expectations for individual achievement that are part of everyday affect as well as escapist movies. The rise of the global service industry stipulates forms of care-work that ask labourers to enact particular affective impersonations in ways that are raced and gendered to appeal. Yet such acting seeps into the rest of life, as performed identities become desired ones. In reading spaces of “Global India” – from Gurgaon to Silicon Valley – Mankekar is troubled by the multiple temporal and affective expectations, imposed and assumed, particularly by women. The impossible to inhabit territory of “Global India” is further complicated by the state(s). Investment in “India Shining” and the expectations placed upon NRIs and domestic elites to support and maintain the brand are a concern throughout the text. A coda introduces a new (and not so new) pressure from the US government after 9/11 to impersonate, if not be, the “good” other. The India that is the focus of Mankekar’s book is, as all cultures are, unsettled, which is likely a good if an uncomfortable thing, yet Mankekar urges her readers to be unsettled as well.

The kind of research this book entails is challenging – filled with shifts in location and the frequent need to fill in the silences of the unspeakable. In a book about destabilizing categories, *Unsettling India* is difficult to classify: accessible yet challenging, theoretical as well as empirical, drawing global concerns down to the microcosm of a shopping cart. Mankekar seems equally at home in media studies and ethnography, in Kanpur and San Jose, and while she seeks to avoid writing a text that leaves readers with a sense of a world in crisis, her well-tuned gaze at the swirling present produces an illuminating vertigo.

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