



Narratives of Gendered Dissent in South Asian Cinemas

Alka Kurian

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This book conducts a post-colonial, gendered investigation of women-centred South Asian films. In these films, the narrative becomes an act of political engagement and a site of feminist struggle: a map that weaves together multiple strands of subjectivity?gender, caste, race, class, religion, and colonialism. The book explores the cinematic construction of an oppositional narrative of feminist dissent with a view to elaborate a historical understanding and theorisation of the 'materiality and politics' of the everyday struggle of Indian women. The book analyzes the ways that 'cultural workers' have tended to use subversive narratives as a tool of resistance. Narratives that are political, ideological, classed, raced and gendered offer the focus of this exploration. Through strategies of disclosure and documentation of memory, personal experiences, and imaginary events shaped by the larger historical, political, and cultural contexts, these discursive texts engage in the processes of struggle against a plethora of oppression: caste, class, religion, patriarchal, sexual, and (neo)colonial. The study looks at the manner in which, through their creative and aesthetic interventions, South Asian film makers enable the articulation of an alternative gendered subjectivity as well as constitute the ground for personal and collective empowerment. Films discussed include Shyam Benegal's *Nishaant*, Nandita Das' *Firaaq*, Beate Arnestad's *My Daughter the Terrorist*, and Sarah Gavron's *Brick Lane*.

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