



Is Indian Civilization a Myth?: Fictions and Histories

By Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Permanent Black, New Delhi, India, 2015. Paperback. Book Condition: New. First Edition. In the title essay of this enthralling collection, Sanjay Subrahmanyam sets a provocative ball rolling: At the heart of the matter, he says, is the notion that at some distant point in the past, say about AD 500, the concept of "Indian civilization" had already been perfected. Everything of any importance was in place: social structure, philosophy, the major literary works. The central idea here is of India-as-civilization, and it very soon becomes the same as a notion of closed India. Demolishing some of the myths which sustain the notion of the wonder that was India, he shows us a region that was always more a crossroads, a rendezvous for concepts, cultures, and worldviews. Subrahmanyam's book is itself a meeting point for a dazzling variety of ideas. It provides the cosmopolitan perspective of a multilingual world scholar who, having begun life in New Delhi, has gone on to live in several thought-provoking cities, including Paris, Lisbon, and Oxford. He is witty, debunking, iconoclastic, and polemically entertaining in all that he anatomizes here: Indian history and fiction, South Asian cultural forms, imperialism and imperialists, secularism and Hindu nationalism, travel writing,...



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