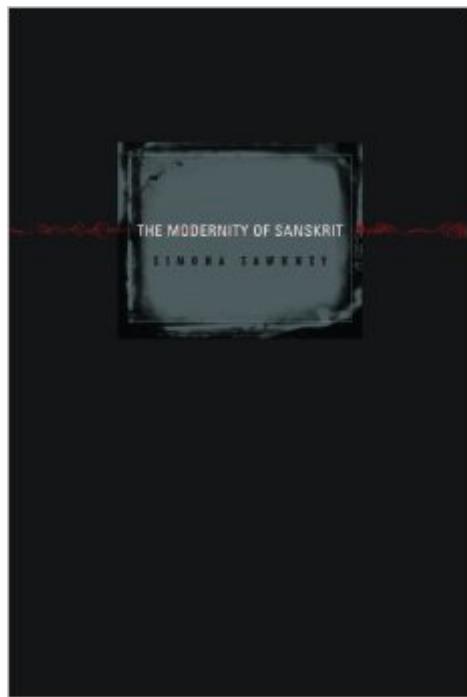


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The Modernity Of Sanskrit



Synopsis

Sanskrit texts have usually been discussed either within the frames of anthropology and religious studies or with a veneration that has substituted for analysis. Going beyond such approaches, Simona Sawhney argues that only a literary approach that resists the closure of interpretation can reveal the fragility, ambivalence, and tension that mark the canonical texts. Today we witness, Sawhney contends, the near-total appropriation of Sanskrit literature by Hindu nationalism. The Modernity of Sanskrit challenges this appropriation by exploring the complex work of Rabindranath Tagore, M. K. Gandhi, and Mohan Rakesh. Sawhney proposes that Indian nationalist writings about classic Sanskrit became a charged site for postcolonial reflections on politics and art in India. Sawhney claims that although new readings of Sanskrit literature played a decisive role in the intellectual conception of modernity in India, the space for such readings has steadily shrunk in contemporary times, leading to a stark diminishment of both the political and the literary lives of the texts.

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Startling perceptions. "This book is written as a way of asking how we might read Sanskrit texts today, not to present a hypothesis about how they may have been read two thousand years ago." p 15

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