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Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor

Priya Srinivasan

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A groundbreaking book that seeks to understand dance as labor, *Sweating Saris* examines dancers not just as aesthetic bodies but as transnational migrant workers and wage earners who negotiate citizenship and gender issues.

Srinivasan merges ethnography, history, critical race theory, performance and post-colonial studies among other disciplines to investigate the embodied experience of Indian dance. The dancers' sweat stained and soaked saris, the aching limbs are emblematic of global circulations of labor, bodies, capital, and industrial goods. Thus the sweating sari of the dancer stands in for her unrecognized labor.

Srinivasan shifts away from the usual emphasis on Indian women dancers as culture bearers of the Indian nation. She asks us to reframe the movements of late nineteenth century transnational Nautch Indian dancers to the foremother of modern dance Ruth St. Denis in the early twentieth century to contemporary teenage dancers in Southern California, proposing a transformative theory of dance, gendered-labor, and citizenship that is far-reaching.

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