



Fashioning Diaspora: Beauty, Femininity, and South Asian American Culture (Asian American History and Culture)

Vanita Reddy

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In her insightful study, *Fashioning Diaspora*, Vanita Reddy carefully maps how transnational itineraries of Indian beauty and fashion shape South Asian American cultural identities and racialized belonging from the 1990s to the late-2000s. She observes how diasporic subjects engage with and respond to various encounters with Indian beauty and fashion.

One of the first books to consider beauty and fashion as a point of entry into an examination of South Asian diasporic public cultures, *Fashioning Diaspora* examines a range of literature, visual art, and live performance. Through careful analyses of novels by Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri, young adult literature, performance art by Shailja Patel, as well as objects of popular culture including an Indian American fashion doll, and beauty and adornment practices, Reddy challenges fashion and beauty as a set of dematerialized, overly commodified cultural practices. She argues instead that beauty and fashion structure South Asian Americans' uneven access to social mobility, capital, and citizenship, and demonstrates their varying capacities to produce social attachments across national, class, racial, gender, and generational divides.

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