Rezensionen

Amrute, Sareeta: Encoding Race, Encoding Class: Indian IT Workers in Berlin. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 268 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-6135-0. Price: £ 18.99

In "Encoding Race, Encoding Class," Sareeta Amrute explores the conditions of digital globalization by a focus on the everyday life of Indian IT coders in Berlin. By investigating the precarious circumstances of this temporary labor force in a neoliberal economy, Amrute reveals the racialized and class-encoded terrain in which these highly skilled yet nonwhite migrant workers try to make a living. Inserted into the transnational IT industries, and employed on short-term contracts, Indian programmers in Germany must reconcile the existential contradictions of race, middle-class aspirations, foreignness, and national belonging. In negotiating such incongruities, as Amrute points out, these elite migrants "are refusing their position in coding economies as limited grunt workers and their slot in European fantasies of migration that compare them with other black and brown bodies," while furthermore attempting to navigate "Indian middle-class identity" (6). Amrute analyzes the resultant "politics of refusal and deflection" in the contexts of the global, German European, and personal worlds of Indian IT workers.

How did the author navigate ethnographic research in this highly fluid and mobile work environment? In addition to anthropological fieldwork, participant-observation, and completing over eighty interviews in IT offices and at trade fairs, Amrute was able to shadow corporate managers and Indian IT workers, attended employee free-time activities, and conducted multiweek team observations. Yet access to corporate spaces proved uneven, since at work knowledge was "a potentially valuable and well-guarded commodity" that was linked to trade secrets (11). Working in field sites defined by "closed doors, indirectly accessible estimations, and calculations about future strategy," the anthropologist could not possibly engage her subjects as a privileged observer. Amrute thus extended her ethnographic insights by scrutinizing pertinent cultural data derived from an analysis of political cartoons, advertisements, and reports on white-collar IT work. In moving beyond a study of coding practices confined to office life, Amrute moreover selected a cohort of twenty Indian IT programmers, who became her primary and most reliable sources of ethnographic information for the private worlds of play outside of work and for establishing rapport with members of the IT community in Berlin. As the author notes, her study invites a theorization of neoliberal regimes of work as linked to the desires, dreams, thoughts, and experiences of laboring bodies in the era of global capitalism.

By investigating the worlds of work, leisure, the "politics of pleasure," family, and friendship, Amrute reveals how the racialization of Indian programmers in Germany intersects with class mobility and labor migration. She shows how Indian programmers occupy a contradictory position: as a source of cheap labor in Europe and the United States, as racialized subjects in Germany as temporary migrant workers, as rising professional elites, and as members of an expansive middle class in India. Such class aspirations also position Indian coders as desiring citizen-consumers who aspire to build on the promise of a prosperous, global, and economically powerful India from within diasporic spaces. The ways in which Indian IT workers in Germany accept and resist the premises and conditions of their short-term employment contracts, as Amrute suggests, point to alternative visions of living and laboring in neoliberal economies. By showing how these Indian coders' cognitive work realigns race and class, Amrute theorizes the intersections of personhood, migration, and nationality within global capitalism in novel ways. "Encoding Race, Encoding Class" by Sareeta Amrute is a fascinating study that is both informative and narratively compelling. Situated in the era of digital globalization, this complex ethnographic project makes a major contribution to European anthropology and pushes forward the insights of critical race theory, international migration studies, and the sociocultural dimensions of science and technology. In accompanying Indian technoelites on their diasporic journey to Germany, a journey marked by precarity, uncertainty, and risk, readers are privileged to gain a deeper understanding of elite professionals, who, in Amrute's words, are "striving to make a life on the terrain of fluid capitalism" in a globalizing Europe.

Uli Linke

Andaya, Barbara Watson, and **Leonard Y. Andaya:** A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400–1830. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 363 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-68193-3. Price: £ 24.99.

Over the last few years, quite a few textbooks on the history of Southeast Asia have been published. The present synthetic overview, aimed at students new to the field,