



The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas

Sudipta Kaviraj

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For decades Sudipta Kaviraj has worked with and improved upon Marxist and subaltern studies, capturing India's social and political life through its diverse history and culture. While this technique has been widely celebrated in his home country, Kaviraj's essays have remained largely scattered and untranslated abroad. This collection finally presents his work to English-speaking readers and, in doing so, reasserts the brilliance of his approach.

As evidenced in these essays, Kaviraj's exceptional strategy positions Indian politics within the political philosophy of the West and alongside the perspectives of Indian history and indigenous political thought. Studies include the peculiar nature of Indian democracy; the specific aspects of Jawaharlal Nehru's and Indira Gandhi's regimes; political culture in independent India; the construction of colonial power; the relationship between state, society, and discourse; the structure of nationalist discourse; language and identity formation in Indian contexts; the link between development and democracy, or democratic functioning; and the interaction among religion, politics, and modernity in South Asia. Each of these essays explores the place of politics in the social life of modern India and is powered by the idea that Indian politics is plastic, reflecting and shaping the world in which people live.

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