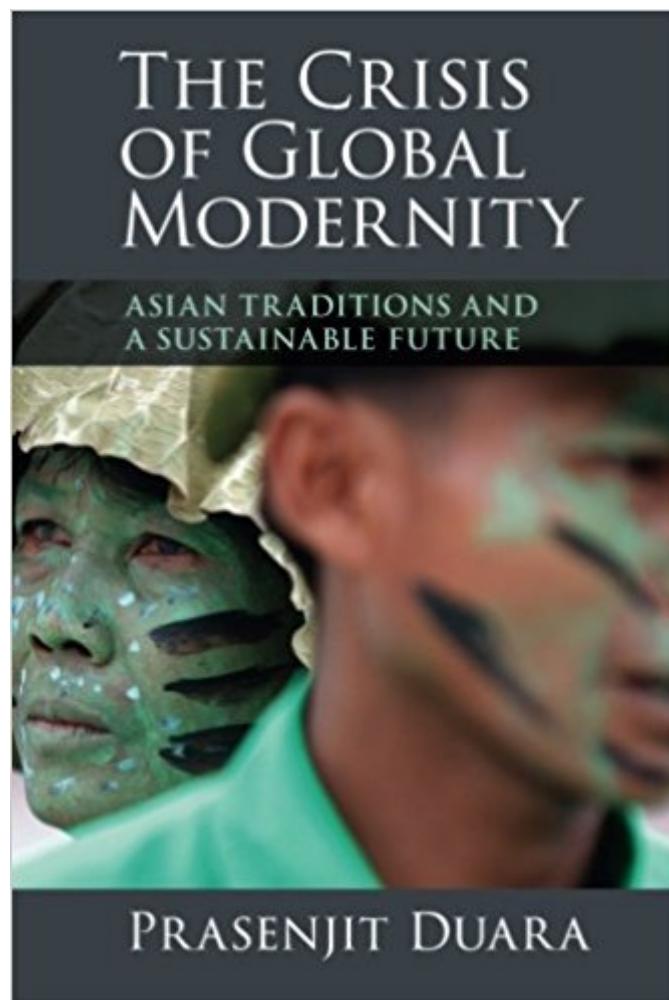


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The Crisis Of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions And A Sustainable Future (Asian Connections)



Synopsis

In this major new study, Prasenjit Duara expands his influential theoretical framework to present circulatory, transnational histories as an alternative to nationalist history. Duara argues that the present day is defined by the intersection of three global changes: the rise of non-western powers, the crisis of environmental sustainability and the loss of authoritative sources of what he terms transcendence - the ideals, principles and ethics once found in religions or political ideologies. The physical salvation of the world is becoming - and must become - the transcendent goal of our times, but this goal must transcend national sovereignty if it is to succeed. Duara suggests that a viable foundation for sustainability might be found in the traditions of Asia, which offer different ways of understanding the relationship between the personal, ecological and universal. These traditions must be understood through the ways they have circulated and converged with contemporary developments.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Prasenjit Duara has written a tough book, an erudite work, a volume that in many ways is the culmination of his entire scholarly career of teaching, writing, and administering to Chinese, Indian, and global histories, values, and ideas that have intersected, circulated, and looped back amongst themselves. Rebuffing the linear histories that camouflage more than they reveal, he offers a rich and illuminating analysis of how Asian religions and philosophies may offer hope for a sustainable

future that is at once local and emplaced and global and circulating at many different scales. His careful and patient clarification of circulating histories, dialogical transcendence, historical logics of global modernity and trafficking between secularism and transcendence, networks of sustainability, and hope and the commons reward the serious reader in an abundance of ways. His defense of Asian traditions particularly of China and India against the shortcomings and collusion of Abrahamic religions will prove a challenge to the faithful and believers of Christianity, Judaism, and Muslim religion in contributing to the crisis of global modernity. Along the way, he shows his respect for aspects of twentieth century philosophy and its relevance and circulation of ideas and concepts of Western thinkers such as Ernst Bloch, Jürgen Habermas, Foucault, and Derrida. In the end, the promises of his introduction are more than amply fulfilled in the main body of the work and beautifully and hopefully summarized in his closing reprise and epilogue, titled, “Of Reason and Hope.”

I have just finished reading this book cover to cover. As I am sort of exhausted you will understand that I will abstain from writing a long commentary. Thought-provoking, entertaining, erudite (jingshenboda). An expert on Asia who is Asian himself. Duara writes with such lucidity that you want him to write on all pressing matters of this time. With that said, be prepared to take time to read this book. It took me on the average twice as long per page as compared with other books, as for Duara’s way of writing is also an art to itself and if there is a way he can make the text more aesthetic, even at the cost of efficiency of the text, he is ready to take that cost. What makes me give the book five stars is that Duara, although delivering a great piece of scholarship, is not shy to make value judgements where necessary (eg. ecology, labour rights etc). This courage is not often seen in researchers who are often content with merely conveying the status quo. Writing a text which opts to demonstrate the entangled history, the circulatory history of different regions in Asia is a bold project. Duara did a very good job.

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