

Title—Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space
Author—Manu Goswami
Year—2004

Categories: India, Economy, Intellectual, Spatial
Place: Colonial India
Time: 1858-1950

Argument Synopsis:

Manu Goswami's *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* claims that making the nation appear natural is central to the project of nationalism. In particular, Goswami explores the multiple intertwined socioeconomic and cultural processes by which the conception of India as a bounded national space and economy was brought into being. She argues that a tension between a universalistic conception of national development and a particularistic, Hindu understanding of nationhood was built into Indian nationalism from before independence. She finds that both the secular institutional nationalism and the Hindu ideology of nationalism rest on the notion of a Hindu majority and Muslim minority in India. Goswami strives to look back to understand how these conceptions of nationalism came to be. Goswami reveals the conception of India as a spatially bounded and singular entity was the starting point for late nineteenth century Indian nationalism.

The dominant periodization of Indian nationalism places the 1885 establishment of the Indian National Congress as the starting point for modern Indian nationalism. Goswami seeks to rework this periodization by highlighting the transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Crown in 1858 as the actual ground zero for Indian nationalism. In order to discuss this earlier period, she utilized an archive of texts produced by upper-caste Hindus during the late 1860s and 1870s in northern colonial India. Goswami's book seeks to utilize methods of subaltern history, space and conceptions of spatiality. Goswami underscores her novel contribution to the field being her creation of the term "colonial state space." This term denotes a complex ensemble of practices, ideologies, and state projects that underpinned the restructuring of the institutional and spatiotemporal matrices of colonial power and everyday life. Goswami intends to utilize strategies of subaltern history in tandem with conceptions of space to produce a spatialized history of Indian nationalism.

By the turn of the century, the identification of India as Bharat and as territorially bounded and historically singular national entity was a self-evident given. She posits that this conception was beholden to a swadeshi-era project that strove to establish the autonomy of indigenous institutions and practices. Goswami emphasizes the importance of the movement in the formation of India's national economy, especially the rejection of foreign goods. She reveals that the conception of India as Bharat was the basis of the movement, which fused a common economic collective with a vision of the social body as specifically Hindu. *Producing India* strives to chart the process through which India became conceptualized as a singular national entity with a Hindu face.

Key Themes and Concepts:

- Creation of colonial state space in India coincided with the transfer of power from the Company to the Crown in 1858
- Railways were most effective work done by colonial state in distilling and communicating the ideology of colonial state space