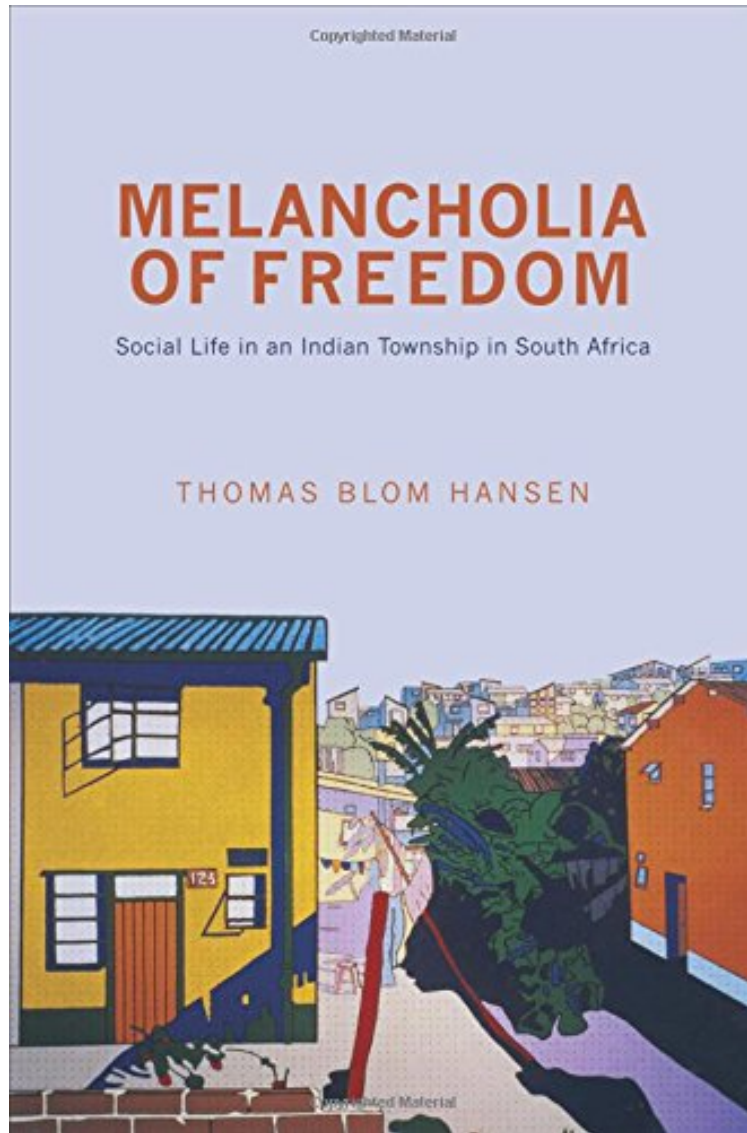


(Download) Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa

Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa

Thomas Blom Hansen

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Thomas Blom Hansen : Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa:

The end of apartheid in 1994 signaled a moment of freedom and a promise of a nonracial future. With this promise came an injunction: define yourself as you truly are, as an individual, and as a community. Almost two decades later it is clear that it was less the prospect of that future than the habits and horizons of anxious life in racially defined enclaves that determined postapartheid freedom. In this book, Thomas Blom Hansen offers an in-depth analysis of the uncertainties, dreams, and anxieties that have accompanied postapartheid freedoms in Chatsworth, a formerly Indian township in Durban. Exploring five decades of township life, Hansen tells the stories of ordinary Indians whose lives were racialized and framed by the township, and how these residents domesticated and inhabited this urban space and its institutions, during apartheid and after. Hansen demonstrates the complex and ambivalent nature of ordinary township life. While the ideology of apartheid was widely rejected, its practical institutions, from urban planning to houses, schools, and religious spaces, were embraced in order to remake the community. Hansen describes how the racial segmentation of South African society still informs daily life, notions of race, personhood, morality, and religious ethics. He also demonstrates the force of global religious imaginings that promise a universal and inclusive community amid uncertain lives and futures in the postapartheid nation-state.

Finalist for the 2013 Melville J. Herskovits Award, African Studies Association "Hansen's analysis of the 'mutual nonrecognition' between citizens of India and African origin and his critical interrogation of the concept of diaspora are especially powerful. . . . The book will be an asset to scholars and students seeking to understand urban South Africa, transnationalism, and religious transformation."--Choice "Hansen's book is definitely a very important one. . . . [S]tudents of segregation, ethnic conflict, urban space, identity, religion, migration, music and cinema will all find something of interest here. More generally, *Melancholia of Freedom* offers a fascinating insight into the fate of minority groups, and the boundary work they engage in. . . . Hansen's account allows us to better understand the processes through which minorities maintain identity and sociability in difficult contexts."--Juliette Galonnier, *booksandideas.net* "As depressing as this conclusion is, the author makes a compelling case for his interpretation. He brilliantly weaves the present into the past, and explains convincingly the foundation of anxieties that prevail in Chatsworth."--Surendra Bhana, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* From the Back Cover "With profound insight, Hansen explores the struggles of South African Indians to take possession of their new political and cultural liberty since the end of apartheid. Showing how they are haunted by a past they cannot openly mourn and bereft of the ambiguous certainties once ensured by a racist state, this compelling and highly original book calls on us to rethink the complex challenges that attend the meaning of freedom everywhere."--Jean Comaroff, University of Chicago "This excellent book provides a subtle and convincingly argued analysis of the 'embarrassment' inherent in belonging to a community which was marginal-within-marginal to the South African mainstream. In exploring complicities and dependencies as well as forms of resistance, and in fusing together issues of politics, popular culture, and religion, it takes a substantial step beyond much of the literature on postapartheid South Africa."--Deborah James, London School of Economics and Political Science "Melancholia of Freedom is an extraordinarily powerful and eloquent account of postapartheid realities. Given the depth and breadth of this sensitive and insightful book, and the vast array of important issues covered, it will no doubt become a classic ethnographic text on contemporary South Africa."--Steven Robins, University of Stellenbosch About the Author Thomas Blom Hansen is professor of anthropology and the Reliance-Dhirubhai Ambani Professor of South Asian Studies at Stanford University, where he also directs the Center for South Asia. His books include *The Saffron Wave* and *Wages of Violence* (both Princeton).