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Neloufer De Mel

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Neloufer De Mel : Women and the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Women and the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka*:

This book explores the development of nationalism in Sri Lanka during the past century, particularly within the dominant Sinhala Buddhist and militant Tamil movements. Tracing the ways women from diverse backgrounds have engaged with nationalism, Neloufer de Mel argues that gender is crucial to an understanding of nationalism and vice versa. Traversing both the colonial and postcolonial periods in Sri Lanka's history, the author assesses a range of writers, activists, political figures, and movements almost completely unknown in the West. With her rigorous, historically located analyses, de Mel makes a persuasive case for the connections between figures like actress Annie Boteju and art historian and journalist Anil de Silva; poetry whether written by Jean Arasanayagam or Tamil revolutionary women; and political movements like the LTTE, the JVP, the Mother's Front, and contemporary feminist organizations. Evaluating the colonial period in light of the violence that animates Sri Lanka today, de Mel proposes what Bruce Robbins has termed a "lateral cosmopolitanism" that will allow coalitions to form and to practice an oppositional politics of peace. In the process, she examines the gendered forms through which the nation and the state both come together and pull apart. The breadth of topics examined here will make this work a valuable resource for South Asianists as well as for scholars in a wide range of fields who choose to consider the ways in which gender inflects their areas of research and teaching.

Elegantly written, thorough, and assured, this book represents a different and extraordinarily valuable insight into the ways in which gender is mediated through the intersection of cultural production and politics. There is very little work done about Sri Lanka on this subject that asks questions with the subtlety de Mel brings to her readings. This work stands as one of most groundbreaking contributions to the literature and will transform how the questions that it engages with are read. (Geeta Patel) About the Author Neloufer de Mel is senior lecturer of the Department of English, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and a member of the visiting faculty in the women's studies program at the same university.