

much, are experiments with (policy) solutions to the problem of ‘forgetting failure’. Political anthropology could help out here, diving into ethnographies of regulators (California or the European Commission would be great starting points; Ghosh 2018; Wilson 2020) to begin with.

Overall, I very much believe that Appadurai and Alexander’s analysis of Silicon Valley in particular is a starting point for a whole new sub-discipline. While we have read much more on banking and Wall Street than on Sand Hill Road and Palo Alto so far, I believe as the balance of (financial) power has shifted West recently, so should the gaze of ethnography. Where we come in is taking some of the theoretical cues Appadurai and Alexander lay out here and run into the field with them. While I appreciate clever thoughts such as the ones in this volume, my anthropology instincts always want more: more stories, more real people, in other words: more ethnography.

References

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- Battaglia, Giulia. 2018. *Documentary film in India: an anthropological history*. London: Routledge. 216 pp. Pb.: £36.99. ISBN 9780367891565.**

How might anthropologists write film history? To what end? And for whom? Such are the underlying puzzles of the book *Documentary film in India: an anthropological history*. In it, anthropologist Giulia Battaglia develops a mode of anthropological history writing that narrates history in the form of an ‘open archive’ of ideas and moments to reflect multiple observations and interpretations.

This approach is shaped by Battaglia’s experiences of conducting research on the documentary film scene in India. She conducted participant observation in the period 2007–2009, later returned to India for follow-up visits, and complemented the ethnography with historical analysis of archival resources, such as newsletters and other discussion platforms on which filmmakers have interacted with each other. As an anthropologist amidst filmmakers, Battaglia found herself in the position of a storyteller among other storytellers, whose reflective practices continually challenged her to revisit her interpretations. The anthropologist cherishes these interactions and integrates them in the book to highlight instances of doubt, dynamism and difference.

The filmmakers with whom she spoke are not only the subjects of the book but also the intended readers. In order to nourish creative energies and encourage further reflection on taken-for-granted categories in existing conversations about documentary filmmaking, Battaglia refrains from imposing certain interpretations that would privilege the experience of some filmmakers over others. Her refusal to create a canon, which would monumentalise some moments in history at the expense of others, is a refusal to impose hierarchies of meaning.

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The open archive approach results in an engaging book, in which the reader meanders between fragments of history that sometimes turn out to be connected in unexpected ways.

The ethnography in the book offers exceptional insights into the discursive and aesthetic practices of documentary filmmakers in India, and into the institutions, social networks and negotiations that have shaped these practices. The lively descriptions of film festivals, small private auditoriums and discussion groups reveal the multiplicity of filmmaking as well as film screening practices in India, and provide challenges to existing discourses about India's documentary film history.

To highlight two of these challenges. First, the author contests the prevalent idea that the much-celebrated filmmaker Anand Patwardhan was a sole pioneer. She instead tells the story of Indian documentary film from the perspectives of a wider range of filmmakers, while also including the perspectives of activists, bureaucrats, students and feminist groups with whom filmmakers have aligned. Second, she contests the idea that the practices of 'independent' filmmakers since the 1970s and 1980s constituted a decisive break with a past of 'state propaganda' in which documentary filmmaking was controlled by Indian state institutions. This second argument is developed by a conceptual unpeeling of the concepts of 'state' and 'independent', and a descriptive explanation of the continuities between the two categories. For example, in the decades after 1947, the postcolonial state's mission of producing films to educate populations about projects of nation-building and development was broadly shared by 'independent' filmmakers, who actively contributed to that mission.

The impact of changing technologies and channels of distribution is shown in a special chapter on the arrival of video

technology since the 1980s. Video technology allowed the circulation of films beyond state control, which prompted filmmakers to develop new links with activists and grassroots social movements, while NGOs started using documentary film as a mode of participatory development in which local communities became part of the filmmaking process. The arrival of the internet does not receive the same amount of analytical attention in the book, which leaves some open-ended questions as to how digital technologies have again restructured film distribution and introduced renewed mechanisms of state control. Another unanswered question, which arises from the descriptions of shifting alliances of filmmakers, activists and state actors, is how documentary filmmaking practices have been shaped by, and have attempted to reshape, religious politics – although the book does mention some examples of films that confront this topic.

For future students of such questions the book has much to offer – in the first place, a way of thinking about documentary filmmaking as a practice that is multiple rather than singular, shaped by complex layers of negotiation and ever-changing yet continuous with the past.

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Bielo, James. 2018. *Ark Encounter: the making of a creationist theme park*. New York: New York University Press. 223 pp. £18.11. ISBN-13: 978-1479842797.

This is a clear and insightful ethnography of the grand design and creation of Ark Encounter, a creationist theme park in Kentucky that, quite literally, brings 'the story' of Noah and his ark to life with a