

School, are to be admired for their effort and congratulated for their success.

Anyone familiar with the plethora of introductory anthropology textbooks available will find this particular textbook refreshingly original. It concentrates on cultural anthropology but skillfully incorporates elements of biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeological anthropology, integrating everything into a lively, coherent whole. Instead of marching readers through topics intended primarily to “cover the field,” the authors have addressed matters of concern to younger readers on their own terms. For example, in place of a standard chapter on biological anthropology, there is a chapter on “The Body”; instead of a chapter on linguistic anthropology, a chapter on “Ways of Thinking and Communicating”; and instead of a chapter on archaeological anthropology, a chapter on “The Role of Material Culture.” The same is true of the several chapters pertaining to cultural anthropology, with titles such as “Personhood,” “Identity,” “Gender,” and “Boundaries.” There are 14 chapters in the book altogether, and in every one of them, the authors pitch their material to students (and teachers) rather than at them. The authors know their students (and teachers) well, and this familiarity pays off handsomely.

Two examples will show just how much this book has to offer the preuniversity classroom. The chapter on “The Body,” the second in the book, begins with a discussion of body modifications such as lip plates and scarification; moves on to a discussion of body image, including training the body in sport and what it means to have a sexy body; and concludes with a lengthy discussion of tattooing in relation to age, identity, and ideology. There is even a discussion of the distribution of tattoos among prisoners in penal institutions. At opportune places in these discussions, the authors introduce various anthropological theories of the body, notably symbolic, feminist, and phenomenological theories, as well as the particular theories of Gregory Bateson, Pierre Bourdieu, and Terence Turner. Generous ethnographic references prompt students to reflect on their own, largely Western conceptualizations and treatments of the body, as do sidebar topics such as body organ trafficking, virtual bodies, and female breast implants.

Another example is the chapter on “Boundaries,” the tenth in the book, where the authors range across a wide range of issues likely to be on the minds of younger students. They begin with discussions of personal space and, following anthropologist Mary Douglas, body boundaries defined by concepts of purity and danger; move on to politicized discussions of boundaries between ethnic groups, highlighting ethnic conflicts in Rwanda in 1994 and the former Yugoslavia in 1992–1995; and conclude with thought-provoking discussions about boundaries between humans and cyborgs and about virtual human worlds such as *Second Life*, where people become avatars. Here too, as in the chapter on “The Body,” generous ethnographic references encourage students to compare and contrast their own beliefs and practices with the beliefs and practices of other people around the world. And, again, the opportune introduction of anthropological theo-

ries allows students to be sophisticated in their grappling with real-world concerns, in this chapter ethnic revitalization, ethnic cleansing, global immigrant diasporas, and the international refugee crisis.

The other chapters are just as engaging as these two. In addition, all chapters offer a variety of pedagogical aids: stop-and-think questions; student activities; marginally-defined key terms; end-of-chapter assessments; tips for teachers; and lists of accessible books, ethnographic films, and websites. Unfortunately, it appears that the A-levels in Anthropology in the United Kingdom are going to be phased out, but, even so, there should be ample markets for this book. Anyone who teaches introductory anthropology, not only at the high school level but also at the beginning university level, should consider adopting it. The publisher and authors deserve a reward. But more importantly, students will find the book exciting, and excitement opens the door to learning.

Paul A. Erickson

Ramberg, Lucinda: *Given to the Goddess. South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. 282 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-5724-7. Price: £ 15.99

The postcolonial Indian state accomplished the incomplete project, initiated during the 19th century, of abolition of the *theogamy/devadasi* custom in the 1980s to deal with its rampant spread amongst ex-untouchable communities, in southern India. Consequently, a spate of sociological works appeared in the 1990s validating the modernist emancipatory project of the nation; articulating outcaste *devadasi* customs’ inevitable rootedness in oppressive caste hierarchy and its nexus with prostitution. Over the years scattered scholarly representations of the outcaste *devadasi/jogati* converged in deluging bleak feminist voices that saw potential in its autonomous space for women in patriarchal caste society, and evacuated the site of all meanings to produce a stigmatized body that served as a poignant source for critiquing traditional structures of exploitation. This book is a systematic exploration of the world inhabited by theogamous women and what is at “stake” in the “erasure” of such ways of being and its implications for unraveling the myths of modernity and the complicity of state in producing specific kinds of exclusion and stigmatization.

Against the grain of dominant representations, the author foregrounds what has so far been presumed unproblematically as self-evident in marriage of girls to the goddess, and argues that such kinship with the goddess signifies non-normative, non-heterosexual marriage. This basic premise that marriage to the goddess is not merely symbolic but “real” like conventional marriage, lends to a remarkable conceptual grid through which the author captures the working of a logic and categories ordering a distinctive totality. Theogamy thus reckoned has implications as it unfolds values and meanings in ways unimagined before. Against the grain of dominant representation of *jogatis*, the book, focusing on “anomalous” personhood of *jogatis* and their ways of “worlding the world,”

unfolds its radical destabilization of naturalized and normative modes of kinship. Such anomaly is “productive” for it offers “enabling possibilities” for reimagining different forms of “relatedness” and different configurations between “sex, gender, and kinship.” Through the narrative the binary between the wife and the prostitute is collapsed, through structuralist analysis of kinship practices by deconstructing the myth of nonmateriality of conjugal sexuality, and recognizing that both are undergirded by producing value in women within the sexual economy and of exploitation. Within this logic of gift-weaving conceptions in medical anthropology, the author argues, *jogatis* like other women in conventional marriage “are trafficked.” Yet within the sexual economy of marriage, the *jogati* is not a simple gift but the “countergift” returns to the natal family transformed by marriage to the goddess. Thus the *jogatis* through such forms of “bodily commitments” and “relatedness” are mediators within a transactional system organized around the sovereignty of the goddess and articulate a sexual economy of auspiciousness thus complicating ways of thinking about the body beyond the classical gift theory.

By juxtaposing centrality of the *jogatis* in the world organized around the sovereignty of Yellamma and the modern nation state, both positioned as different ways of “world making,” it is investigated what is at stake in the erasure underway with the ideological legitimacy of the latter in the form of transformation ensued by reform. It is here, that theogamy is reclaimed as a concrete site for accounts of a nonnormative form of kinship, rearticulation of sexuality and gender, and critique of modernity and knowledge practices.

The alliance between the sacred and *jogatis*, its embodiments in the body and everyday practices is the axis around which the analytical field is laid for examining the problematic incursions of postcolonial modernity. Analyzing the nature of postcolonial reform, the author identifies emancipatory, liberal strands (Christian feminists, dalit movement, and medical interventions) converging in producing bounded, rights-bearing individuals by stigmatizing bodies and certain form of ecstatic religiosity as false religion. These processes are simultaneous with the emergence of upper caste Hinduism as “world religion,” which entails commitment to a newer bodily disposition and authority to define permissible forms of religiosity. The discontinuity from colonial reform is evidenced by the deployment of biomedical conceptions anchored in liberal secular politics. Unlike general misconceptions and claims of the NGOs that rehabilitation was achieved by means of “creating awareness” and through “consent,” this study poignantly narrates the surreptitious and coercive nature of this transformation.

Despite the indubitable coercive nature of change underway, positing both the world of the *jogatis* and that of reform/modernity/state as “world making projects,” the latter “entails a violent remaking of the other” unlike the former is problematic. The bodily afflictions, rituals of sacrifice, and bodily offerings in the form of hook-swinging (performed by the *jogati* till recently) within this order of auspiciousness and even the very frenzied quality

of religious state of being in confrontations with the other defy such binary. Both are not only articulated around contrary loci of sovereignty but founded on different conceptions of violence.

To critically engage with this study, it would be useful to mark the limitations and possibilities entrapped in some of the formulations. What import does this study, which is primarily an exploration of gender and religion, have on rethinking caste? The author indicates another aspect of anomaly by noting how the *jogati* complicates marginality as one who is central to the economy of auspiciousness, mediating flows of auspiciousness and wealth, and yet constrained by caste norms in everyday interactions with upper caste devotees. The dispersed remarks concerning the power of Yellamma as not only contra caste purity but also threatening the very “varna order” and how certain forms of relatedness to the sacred are sites of creative disorder are not adequately elucidated. Yet these oblique inferences on caste are inadequately unpacked through other sites (e.g., the patrons, temple priests). Yet the study is suggestive of a very crucial principle at work in this context that religious power is unbound by norms of purity and pollution. The most useful insight on gender as both performative and transactional, in this study, has immense value for further exploring the nature of ties that undergird caste alliances and configuration of networks.

This anthropological study is in keeping with the investments of feminist anthropology and queer studies in the field of kinship studies. Theogamy offers a solid analytical ground for enriching the metaphysical foundations of newer configurations of relatedness, personhood, and being. Over a spectrum of relatedness articulated by *jogatis*, Ramberg’s hermeneutics privileges one element as the defining criterion in formulating the basic premise of theogamy. Yet the value of formulations premised around analyzing theogamy, as “same sex marriage” that organizes “opposite sex relations” are extremely significant, even when other theogamous practices falsify the basic premise (to note, for instance, women married to male gods or other symbolic objects). What is problematic is the conception of the nature of the power of dangerous sacred feminine in the analysis of campaign against matted locks. Yellamma is cast as a phallic goddess, the jade (matted locks) as signifying the “lingam” (phallus) of Yellamma and the *jogatis* as having “incorporated the phallus as part of their own bodies.” Even as such postulation contradicts with the *jogatis*, who disarticulate power of Jamadagni, Yellamma’s spouse, they are conceived as the very embodiments of the goddess and share her travails as the widow and power as the auspicious wife. Moreover, the author notes that such feminine dangerous/transgressive power originates at the moment phallogocentric power recedes to the background. Given the gender trouble that Yellamma is believed to spell over those she claims by skewing their sexed bodies across gender, it is the archetype of the “troublesome” yet nurturing mother that Yellamma may more creatively symbolize, being thus intimately associated by devotees as well as the *jogatis*. What is at odds is the metaphysical value and symbolic reading

remains entrapped by phallocentrism, extrapolated unto a space that is centered around the sovereignty of feminine sacred. The phallus is itself reclaimed, “reterritorialized” as the master signifier contrary to the conception and omnipotence of the feminine sacred/danger and power that organizes religion around the symbol of the womb/*udi* (associated with fecundity) or the clitoris/*yoni* (feminine creative energy). This also is an opportunity to move beyond the Oedipal trajectory to other foundational categories for grasping the essence of sexuality of religion in the Indic civilizational context.

However, much Western primacy in shaping the conceptual universe and reimagining the East may be criticized, in this instance, such mediation to reclaim collectivities from discursive death (contrary to “social death” which is itself a form of epistemic violence and our inability to comprehend the continuing value of such collectivities for the dominant order) is welcome. Ramberg’s work exemplifies an extraordinary synthesis of animated empiricism and theoretical rigor. It is heartening to mark the arrival of this very important work that signals a critical departure in several ways.

Priyadarshini Vijaisri

Rasmussen, Mattias Borg: *Andean Waterways. Resource Politics in Highland Peru.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015. 217 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-99493-2. Price: \$ 30.00

Rasmussen ha escrito un libro muy importante para la comprensión de la gobernanza del agua en las cuencas andinas del Perú. Y lo ha hecho con rigor científico, detalle etnográfico y una notable empatía con los campesinos de Recuay, Ancash, quienes viven al pie de la espectacular Cordillera Blanca y experimentan cotidiana y directamente las incertidumbres del cambio climático global. Al tratarse de una aproximación etnográfica propia de un *bottom-up approach* a la praxis social, el autor plantea desde la ecología política que es necesario investigar no solo cómo la gente se está adaptando al cambio climático, sino cómo este es procesado por los universos culturales, sociales y políticos que las sociedades campesinas han desarrollado para manejarse en sus ecosistemas y en los complejos entornos institucionales, políticos y económicos que las engloban. Por eso el libro está organizado en capítulos que versan sobre las fuentes y canales de agua de la comunidad campesina Los Andes y los poblados de Huancapampa, Ocopampa y Pocrac, y sobre una protesta regional en contra de un proyecto minero que hubiese afectado a la lejana laguna de Conococha que, aún así, representa una fuente de agua, identidad y belleza para los pobladores de la región y del propio Recuay.

Centrado en el fluir del agua, Rasmussen analiza la tensión entre los regímenes de apropiación y gobernanza local del recurso y las normas estatales de alcance nacional, léase, la Ley de Recursos Hídricos promulgada el 2009 y su profusa reglamentación. Para explicar la dialéctica entre la gobernanza campesina y las exigencias estatales, Rasmussen apela a tres conceptos que sustentan su exploración etnográfica y teórica.

En primer lugar, afirma correctamente que las sociedades campesinas, en particular las comunidades, no son la antítesis telúrica y ancestral del Estado colonial o republicano, sino que, por el contrario, son partes integrantes de las diferentes formaciones histórico-políticas que se han desarrollado en los Andes Centrales. Este carácter integral pero subordinado es el que produce, precisamente, la tensión estructural entre la denominada “soberanía comunal” y el típico *ius imperium* que reivindican los estados modernos.

En segundo lugar, propone la noción de *abandono* para graficar el punto de vista campesino sobre las ofensivas desarrollistas y disciplinarias que las diversas agencias estatales lanzan irreflexiva, esporádica e inconsultamente. Esa incapacidad para sustentar las leyes y políticas públicas en el diálogo con la sociedad peruana, en general, es la que produce ese *abandono*, una brecha insondable entre las visiones y necesidades locales, y los dictados estatales. Para hacer sentido de esa incompreensión y del desprecio contumaz que los pueblos y comunidades del Ande experimentan, la noción de *abandono* sintetiza tanto la intelección local como la lucha campesina por recursos estatales, el reconocimiento de sus derechos individuales y colectivos, y la afirmación de sus formas autonómicas de organización.

En tercer lugar, utiliza el concepto de *water regimen formation* para dar cuenta del complejo sistema de condicionamientos topográficos, hidrográficos, climáticos, normativos (nacionales o locales), políticos, económicos y culturales que posibilitan o impiden que el agua circule en determinado paisaje hídrico, en este caso el de Recuay. Esta noción, formidable descriptiva y analíticamente, le permite transitar de la clásica etnografía de lo exótico (e. g., “la visión andina del agua”) a un libro riguroso, sugerente y muy bien documentado sobre la ecología política del agua en la sierra peruana.

Que el agua fluya y *alcance* es un imperativo categórico en la economía moral de los sistemas de gestión local o campesina del recurso. En este libro, Rasmussen reconstruye etnográfica y teóricamente las dinámicas sociales, hidráulicas y políticas que los campesinos de Recuay desarrollan para lograr ambas metas. Lo más interesante del caso es que el autor resalta en todo momento la gran heterogeneidad social, hidráulica, económica y política que caracteriza a los pueblos y comunidades de la Cordillera Blanca. Es más, enfatiza cómo cada canal o fuente de agua es aprovechado por un conjunto de familias campesinas y organizaciones muy diferentes entre sí. Así, las acequias multiuso vinculan a usuarios que van desde una comunidad campesina pequeña hasta asociaciones de regantes de mayor envergadura, quienes deben conjugar sus demandas de agua, resolver sus conflictos y manejar la infraestructura compartida de manera articulada, generando un balance siempre contestable. El autor no presenta un paisaje hidráulico uniforme o plano, sino uno irregular, cambiante y multifacético, tal como los Andes mismos. He ahí su principal virtud.

Más allá de estos méritos, el libro presenta algunas limitaciones. Hubiera sido muy productivo integrar a su marco teórico la literatura sobre los derechos de agua a la