

societies where racial, gender, class and religious boundaries were being renegotiated. Dean Mahomed took advantage of this flux as best he could, distancing himself from or accentuating his 'Indianness' as the situation warranted. At times his writings mimicked the stylistic conventions, ethical positions, and political agendas of his readers. What we would now identify as orientalism runs through his *Travels*. He speaks of Indians in terms that are strikingly similar to those which we would expect Europeans to use, e.g., referring to camp followers as "composed of the lowest order of the people residing in the country, and forming many distinct tribes according to their various occupations" (p. 25). Yet at other times Mahomed takes on the task of trying to mediate between India and Britain; this takes many forms, including an insider's view of an Indian funeral and marriage, and an effort to portray figures like Chayt Singh, vilified by Europeans, in a more sympathetic light.

Ultimately, it is the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the text, as well as Dean Mahomed's choice of literary forms and embellishments, that are the most revealing. It is not so much his life, but how he wanted his life to be seen, that allows us to appreciate just how complex cross-cultural navigation was in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Michael Fisher has done a first rate job in making such complex interactions so accessible, enlightening, and entertaining. I would recommend his book without hesitation to anyone interested in cross-cultural contacts or in the application of colonial rule in eighteenth century India.

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Living Liberation in Hindu Thought. Edited by ANDREW O. FORT and PATRICIA Y. MUMME. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. xiv, 278 pp. \$59.50 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

This collection of provocative, often technical essays has emerged from panels and discussions, beginning in 1989 and extending over several years, within the American Academy of Religion. They take as their starting point the observation that religious traditions around the globe and throughout history have held out the possibility of human perfection or liberation. Such a possibility is commonly known in the Hindu tradition—where "Hindu" refers to those "authors and schools of thought. . . [who] take the Veda and *Itihāsa purāṇa* as authoritative, and/or worship some form of Viṣṇu or Śiva" (p. 12n)—as *mokṣa* or *mukti*. What is striking about the Hindu formulation in comparative context is that it appears to promise liberation while still living (*jīvmukti*), that is, while embodied and prior to death. But what is equally arresting is that there is no consensus within the tradition about what an individual is liberated *from* or *to*. The collective intent of these essays is to inquire into the variety of Hindu opinions on these matters, as evidenced in the ideas of major thinkers or texts written during the classical period, and thereby to advance our understanding of a justly famous doctrine that has heretofore escaped nuanced examination.

Andrew Fort's introduction consists chiefly of brief summaries of the ensuing essays, although he also identifies some of the recurring questions: "What is the relation of liberation to embodiment? . . . How do forms of bondage such as *karma* . . . limit or prevent liberation? . . . How are *karma* and ignorance related? . . . How

does one overcome the obstacles to liberation? . . . How are processes of purification and Yogic enstasis . . . related to liberation? If one can be liberated while living, how does such a person act in the world?" (pp. 3–4). Eight essays then appear in three Parts. Part 1, "Living Liberation in Vedānta Traditions," contains Lance Nelson's "Living Liberation in Śaṅkara and Classical Advaita: Sharing the Holy Waiting of God," Kim Skoog's "Is the Jīvanmukti State Possible? Rāmānuja's Perspective," and Daniel Sheridan's "Direct Knowledge of God and Living Liberation in the Religious Thought of Madhva." Part 2, "Yoga and Renunciation in Living Liberation," has Christopher Chapple's "Living Liberation in Sāṃkhya and Yoga," Andrew Fort's "Liberation While Living in the *Jīvanmuktiviveka*: Vidyāraṇya's 'Yogic Advaita,'" and Mackenzie Brown's "Modes of Perfected Living in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas: The Different Faces of Śuka the Renouncer." Part 3, "Living Liberation in Śaiva Traditions," contains Paul Muller-Ortega's "Aspects of Jīvanmukti in the Tantric Śaivism of Kashmir" and Chacko Valiaveetil's "Living Liberation in Śaiva Siddhānta." Patricia Mumme's conclusion offers a brief historical summary of *jīvanmukti* as concept and term, a provocative typology of the different views discussed in the essays, and further explores theistic understandings of liberation.

All essays are technically competent, often dazzlingly so, as the authors thread their way through complex philosophical arguments. This reviewer found those by Nelson, Chapple, Brown, and Muller-Ortega to be the most satisfying, in part because of their attention to matters of history and chronology as well as textual exegesis, and in part because they are in implicit conversation with one another. Apart from Mumme's fine conclusion, there are very few cross-references between the essays. One wishes for more. A more serious problem is the absence of extended treatment of Buddhist and Jain points of view. The occasional allusions to such positions are invariably instructive. The volume's aspiration to being a historical overview of *jīvanmukti* discussions, as well as an exegesis of particular points of view, itself highlights this lacuna, since, as Mumme herself notes, "It is likely that the Buddhists were the first to clearly articulate that release from *karma* could be attained in a living state they called *nirvāṇa*" (p. 247), and the impact of Buddhist thought on the development of Advaita Vedānta, in particular, is well-known. The significance of this volume will be further realized when juxtaposed with an examination of non-Hindu and contemporary views of living liberation, which Mumme identifies as desiderata for future study. In the interim, this volume is a fine first step toward a better understanding of a distinctive, complex, puzzling, yet compelling component of South Asian religious life.

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From the Margins of Hindu Marriage: Essays on Gender, Religion, and Culture.
 Edited by LINDSEY HARLAN and PAUL B. COURTRIGHT. New York:
 Oxford University Press, 1995. xiii, 250 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper).

Much has been written about marriage in India, partly because in this part of the world marriage both generates and reflects crucial notions about social order. It touches upon issues of caste and subcaste boundaries, family dynamics, gender-role expectations, and of how deities function (unmarried deities tend to be the exception, and their single state has much to do with the kinds of powers they wield). All these