



With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India (Worlds of Desire: The Chicago Series on Sexuality, Gender, and Culture)

Gayatri Reddy

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With Respect to Sex is an intimate ethnography that offers a provocative account of sexual and social difference in India. The subjects of this study are *hijras* or the "third sex" of India—individuals who occupy a unique, liminal space between male and female, sacred and profane.

Hijras are men who sacrifice their genitalia to a goddess in return for the power to confer fertility on newlyweds and newborn children, a ritual role they are respected for, at the same time as they are stigmatized for their ambiguous sexuality. By focusing on the *hijra* community, Gayatri Reddy sheds new light on Indian society and the intricate negotiations of identity across various domains of everyday life. Further, by reframing *hijra* identity through the local economy of respect, this ethnography highlights the complex relationships among local and global, sexual and moral, economies.

This book will be regarded as the definitive work on *hijras*, one that will be of enormous interest to anthropologists, students of South Asian culture, and specialists in the study of gender and sexuality.

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