



Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity

Nancy Jay

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Why does sacrifice, more than any other major religious institution, depend on gender dichotomy? Why do so many societies oppose sacrifice to childbirth, and why are childbearing women so commonly excluded from sacrificial practices? In this feminist study of relations between sacrifice, gender, and social organization, Nancy Jay reveals sacrifice as a remedy for having been born of woman, and hence uniquely suited to establishing certain and enduring paternity. Drawing on examples of ancient and modern societies, Jay synthesizes sociology of religion, ethnography, biblical scholarship, church history, and classics to argue that sacrifice legitimates and maintains patriarchal structures that transcend men's dependence on women's reproductive powers.

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