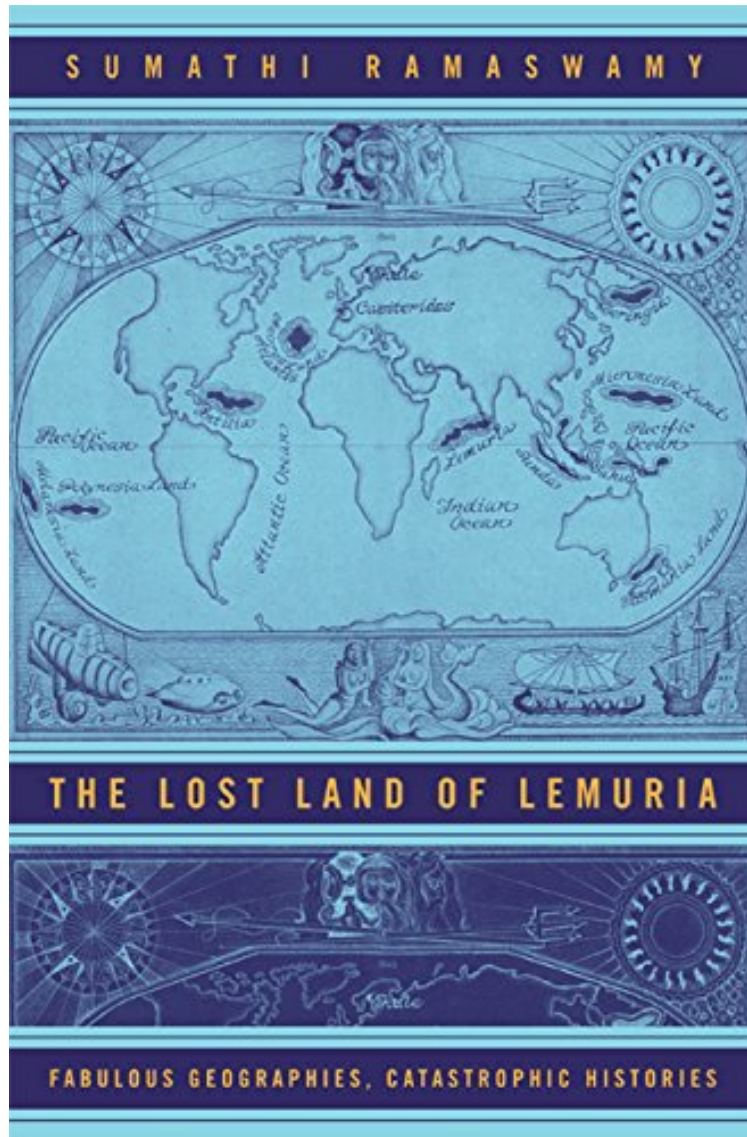


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The Lost Land of Lemuria: Fabulous Geographies, Catastrophic Histories

Sumathi Ramaswamy

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Sumathi Ramaswamy : The Lost Land of Lemuria: Fabulous Geographies, Catastrophic Histories before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lost Land of Lemuria: Fabulous Geographies, Catastrophic Histories:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of very very few books about KumariKandam By Raji One of very very few books about KumariKandam. Very detailed study and yet to finish this. Great outline for my daughters

9th grade project of 1 person found the following review helpful. Informative and well illustrated. By Gerald S. Bringle. Very good book. Very well done and illustrated nicely. Easy to read and very informative. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An absorbing account of Tamil society, origins and aspirations ... By William Courson Sumathi Ramaswamy, an associate professor of history at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor has written a captivating account of what in the West has come to be known as Lemuria, or Mu, a lost continent in the Southern hemisphere variously placed in either the Pacific or Indian oceans. First postulated in the mid-nineteenth century by geographers, biologists and evolutionary theorists as an explanatory mechanism for the similarity of flora and fauna found in Southeastern Africa, Madagascar and the Indian subcontinent, Lemuria captured the attention and imagination of occultists like Helena Petrovna Blavatsky - who saw the sunken land mass as the primordial home of a divinely engendered humankind - as well as nascent Tamil nationalists eager to promote the notion of a vast Tamil empire, now lost, whose sole contemporary remnant is the Tamil-speaking regions of Southernmost India and Northern Sri Lanka. It is on the role of this "lost world" in the elaboration of Tamil origins, identity, communal solidarity, and aspirations to nationhood that the author focuses. Kumari Kandam is a land mass that is supposed to have sunk beneath the India Ocean sometime in middle to late prehistory, extending from the southern tip of peninsular India to Madagascar in the west, and Australia in the east. It is sometimes considered as part or all of Lemuria, a hypothetical continent variously located in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. References to Kumari Kandam can be found throughout the Tamil classical literature, detailing how that extensive land mass, the home of Tamil science, language and philosophy, occupied by the Tamil people in their peaceful and prosperous kingdoms since sentient life first emerged on the planet had been lost to the sea due to a succession of massive tidal waves and other catastrophes. Beginning amongst Europeans in the mid-nineteenth century, the more-or-less analogous Lemuria was imagined as a continent that once bridged India and Africa and disappeared into the ocean (either the Pacific or the Indian, depending on the account) millennia ago, much like Atlantis. Ramaswamy's work is a sustained meditation on a lost place from a lost time, an elegantly written book that is (to my awareness) the first to explore Lemuria's incarnations across cultures, from Victorian-era science to Euro-American theosophical occultism to colonial and postcolonial India to the contemporary yearnings of Tamil nationalism and identity-building. The Lost Land of Lemuria widens into a provocative exploration of the poetics and politics of loss to consider how this sentiment manifests itself in a fascination with vanished homelands, hidden civilizations, near-forgotten peoples and lost greatness. More than a consideration of nostalgia, it shows how ideas once entertained but later discarded in the metropole can travel to the periphery--and can be appropriated by those seeking to construct a meaningful world within the disenchantment of modernity. Sumathi Ramaswamy ultimately reveals how loss itself has become a condition of modernity, compelling us to rethink the politics of imagination and creativity in our day. Ramaswamy's book is not only beautifully written and a most engaging read, it is also an important book, one which will force scholars to look anew at fabulous legends of lost lands and forgotten civilizations generally and more particularly at the greatness and global significance of Tamil civilization.

During the nineteenth century, Lemuria was imagined as a land that once bridged India and Africa but disappeared into the ocean millennia ago, much like Atlantis. A sustained meditation on a lost place from a lost time, this elegantly written book is the first to explore Lemuria's incarnations across cultures, from Victorian-era science to Euro-American occultism to colonial and postcolonial India. The Lost Land of Lemuria widens into a provocative exploration of the poetics and politics of loss to consider how this sentiment manifests itself in a fascination with vanished homelands, hidden civilizations, and forgotten peoples. More than a consideration of nostalgia, it shows how ideas once entertained but later discarded in the metropole can travel to the periphery and can be appropriated by those seeking to construct a meaningful world within the disenchantment of modernity. Sumathi Ramaswamy ultimately reveals how loss itself has become a condition of modernity, compelling us to rethink the politics of imagination and creativity in our day.

"Ramaswamy's important book is sure to ignite fresh interest in the place of lost lands in the modern imaginary. Her fascinating account of the least known of these--Lemuria--breathes new life into the centrality of 'Labors of loss' in nationalist historiography." From the Inside Flap "This path-breaking book makes novel and riveting connections between scientists and occultists in the West and Tamil nationalists in India. Ramaswamy's history of the fabulous and lost continent of Lemuria is a brilliant demonstration of how imagination travels." Dipesh Chakrabarty, author of *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* Sumathi Ramaswamy's important book is sure to ignite fresh interest in the place of lost lands in the modern imaginary. Her fascinating account of the least known of these Lemuria breathes new life into the centrality of 'labors of loss' in nationalist historiography. In refusing to dismiss such narratives as eccentric and inconsequential, Ramaswamy compels scholars to look anew at the fabulous and occult in order to understand the shaping of scientific and colonial modernity. Impeccably researched and elegantly written, this is altogether a marvelous read." Gauri Viswanathan, Columbia University, author of *Outside the*

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