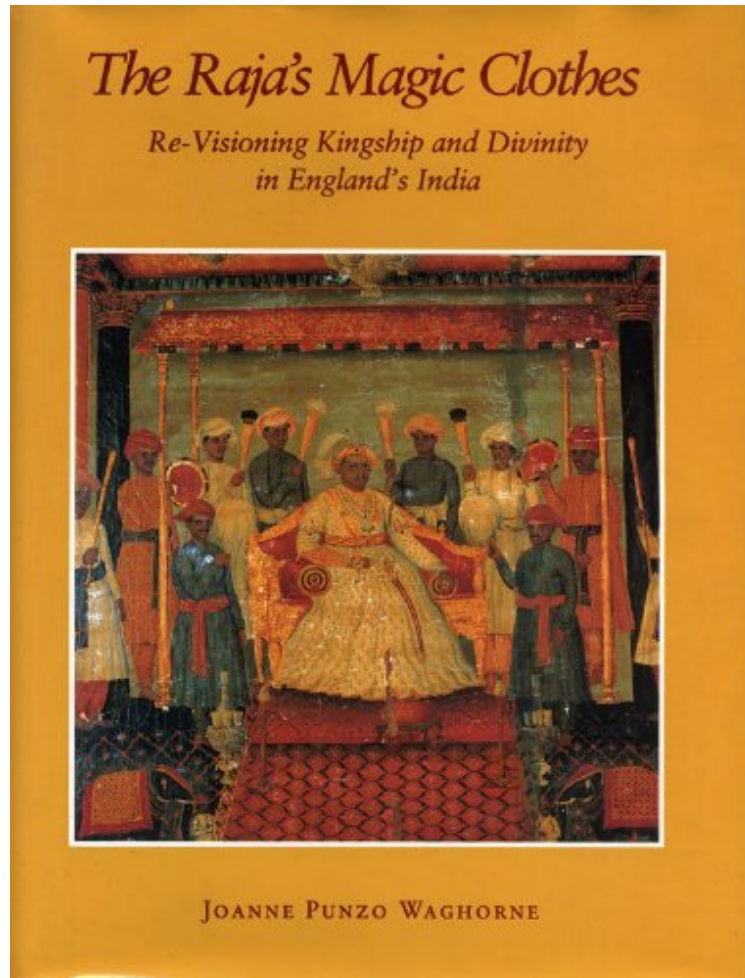


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(Hermeneutics: Studies in the History of Religions)

## The Raja's Magic Clothes: Re-Visioning Kingship and Divinity in England's India (Hermeneutics: Studies in the History of Religions)

Joanne Punzo Waghorne

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**Joanne Punzo Waghorne : The Raja's Magic Clothes: Re-Visioning Kingship and Divinity in England's India (Hermeneutics: Studies in the History of Religions)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Raja's Magic Clothes: Re-Visioning Kingship and Divinity in England's India (Hermeneutics: Studies in the History of Religions):

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A good book when it sticks to the facts By Michael Booker This book makes a number of good points, but they are overshadowed by the author's political agenda. The fact that a book about prehistoric sex feels obligated to go on an extended analysis of Nazi racism (pp. 237-243) pretty much sums up how far it veers from its stated topic. The author does his best work when he focuses, oddly enough, on what we \*don't\*

know. His discussion of the ancient "Venus" figures is interesting because he offers a range of possible interpretations and cautions against drawing any hasty conclusions about their original meaning(s). His discussion of the difficulty in "sexing" skeletons is interesting, as I had presumed that that was fairly easy to do and that DNA analysis was routinely used to clarify the identity of badly damaged remains. Further, I liked his explanation of how sexually-charged artifacts get buried in museum basements and this distort our understanding of our ancestors. Unfortunately, Taylor's bias builds steam as the book progresses. He is willing to accept almost any evidence that ancients were more liberal than modern West in their sexual attitudes, especially when it comes to homosexuality and transgendered individuals. He draws selectively from primate behaviors after cautioning that it's wrong to do precisely that. The book goes far past the physical evidence to paint a particular picture of \*natural\* human sexuality, a sexuality that the West has denied and buried. Even if his assertions are correct (which I doubt), his evidence simply doesn't support his assertions. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Better for the facts and observations than for the opinions and conclusions. By B-Crew This book gathers some facts and observations that are quite useful if you are interested in understanding human sexuality. I found the author's personal opinions and conclusions drawn from those facts and observations less useful. Quite worth the price and the investment in reading the book if you take the author's theories with a grain of salt. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By AH Great book that complements the new research within evolutionary biology on the prehistoric origins of modern human sexuality.

In *The Raja's Magic Clothes*, Joanne Punzo Waghorne places before our eyes British imperialism and a small South India kingdom in the actual settings in which they performed their interplay not only in the Indian world but also in the world of English courtiers, diplomats, and scholars. *The Raja's Magic Clothes* explores the refashioning of the rituals of kingship in Pudukkottai during the crucial period from 1858 to 1947. Waghorne discusses these changes in the context of a profound but undeclared reciprocity that occurred between British overlord and Indian prince, between British bureaucrat and Hindu pandit, and between British scholar and British civil servant in creating the grand ceremonial system of the Raj, and with it the multifarious world of ornamental things that permeated Victorian life. While scholars at Oxford and Cambridge worked diligently to create distinctions to mark West from East, rational from magical, and British from Indian, the British governors were sitting beside native princes like the Raja of Pudukkottai on his very throne and under his sacred canopy. *The Raja's Magic Clothes* reveals how the gap between the pragmatic need for a shared royal ritual and the theoretical construction of difference left open a space where overt theologies were masked, allowing the British and their Indian players to don old royal ornaments recovering religious things from a world beyond magic and reason. Since Joanne Waghorne was permitted use of the Palace Records for the first time, *The Raja's Magic Clothes* includes significant new material for scholars. In addition, the book provides the first full photographic documentation of the old palace at Pudukkottai, the Dakshinamurti temple within that palace, and the interior of the state Tirugokarnam temple, giving readers the opportunity to see the palace and both temples not only for the beauty of their art and architecture but also in the context of the complex ritual system.

*The Raja's Magic Clothes* is a sumptuous object, a delight to hold, look at, and read. . . . Joanne Waghorne's prose is often refreshingly stylish and lively. To most historians of religion, accustomed to dry text and unillustrated exposition, this work will bring unaccustomed pleasure. History of Religions About the Author Joanne Punzo Waghorne is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina. She is the author of *Images of Dharma: The Epic World of C. Rajagopalachari* (1985) and co-editor of *Gods of Flesh/Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India* (1985).