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## The Ravenous Hyenas and the Wounded Sun: Myth and Ritual in Ancient India (Myth and Poetics)

*Stephanie W. Jamison*

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**Stephanie W. Jamison : The Ravenous Hyenas and the Wounded Sun: Myth and Ritual in Ancient India (Myth and Poetics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ravenous Hyenas and the Wounded Sun: Myth and Ritual in Ancient India (Myth and Poetics):

Vedic Sanskrit literature contains a wealth of material concerning the mythology and religious practices of India between 1500 and 500 B.C.E.a crucial period in the formation of traditional Indian culture. Stephanie W. Jamison here addresses the conditions that have limited our understanding of Vedic myth and ritual, such as the profusion and obscurity of the texts and the tendency on the part of scholars to approach mythology and ritual independently. Tracing two key myths through a variety of texts, Jamison provides insight into the relationship between early Indic myth and ritual as well as offering a new methodology for their study.After a brief survey of Vedic literature and religion, Jamison examines the recurrences of the myths "Indra fed the Yatis to the hyenas" and "Svarbhanu pierced the sun with darkness." Focusing on their verbal form and ritual setting, she essays a general interpretation of the myths and their ritual purpose. Her book sheds new light on some central figures in Vedic mythology and on the evolution of Vedic mythological narrative, and it points to parallels in other cultures as well. Indologists and other

scholars and students of South Asian culture, Indo-Europeanists, folklorists, historians of religion, classicists, and comparatists will welcome this rich and suggestive introduction to the Vedic tradition.

"In *The Ravenous Hyenas and the Wounded Sun*, Stephanie Jamison rescues two Vedic myths from oblivion. In the process of this seemingly small task, she restores vigor to Vedic studies in particular and to the study of mythology in general." *Journal of Religion* "This fresh and insightful book engages the complexities of Vedic myth and ritual. It provides a valuable corrective to the trends in Vedic studies that have taken myth and ritual as independent, self-referential realms." Alf Hiltebeitel, Department of Religion, The George Washington University