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All the contributions to this fine book are attempts to prove that emotions "are fundamentally culturally constructed appraisals telling people what they feel-experience" (17). This model for subjectivity explicitly denies any universality, structure or hierarchy of emotions, and denies as well the role of empathy for grasping the inner states of others. Instead, emotions are conceptualized as learned, interpreted, and situational embodiments of moral meanings continually renegotiated within the 'free play' of contrasting signs that is taken to constitute culture. The power of this 'constructivist' paradigm is clearly demonstrated in these excellent analyses of difficult ethnographic material. Nonetheless, the theoretical model is somewhat restrictive, and a wider range of approaches to understanding emotion, although possibly interfering with the volume's cohesion, might have added more scope.

The book begins with an introduction by the editor, which succinctly sets forth the theoretical frame. Essays by Margaret Trawick and Sylvia Vatuk then seek to demonstrate that love relations and dependency of the aged in the family are expressed differently in India than in the West: dependency of the elderly is without guilt, while love is associated with withdrawal and teasing. In a similar vein, Pauline Kolenda rethinks the old problem of 'joking relationships' among affines by focusing on the way humor not only diffuses tensions between potential enemies, but also permits a liberating sense of freedom from formal restrictions. And Verne Dusenbery shows us how misunderstandings between Punjabi Sikhs living in the West and white
converts are largely based on the converts' inability to grasp Punjabi emotional involvement in 
izzat, or honor.

Occasionally in these essays one does sense some stretching to fit the data within the paradigm, and periodically there is a 'return of the repressed' as hard-to-ignore Freudian concepts recalcitrantly reappear in various guises. But in general these papers are convincing precisely because they show how emotional stances that are different (but not too different) from our own nonetheless 'make sense' within their ethnographic setting.

More 'experience distant', more problematic, and therefore more challenging are the remainder of the essays, which focus on an aspect of India most unfamiliar to Westerners, i.e., the encompassing spiritual sphere of Hinduism. The papers by Owen Lynch, Paul Toomey, Peter Bennett and Charles Brooks all deal with one remarkable area of this vast domain; bhakti (devotional) worship in the great pilgrimage region of Braj, south of Delhi, where Krishna allegedly was born and lived. The remaining paper, by Frédérique Marglin, reconstructs the meaning and experience of temple dance in Orissa, but it too has a similar story to tell.

Each of these stimulating papers informs us of the remarkable efforts made by worshippers to immerse themselves completely in stereotypical emotional relationships with God. This type of reverence, which aspires to a willed transformation not only of ideas, but also of feelings, is an offshoot of classical Sanskrit poetics where the eight basic human sentiments (bhava) are purified through artistic performance into detached and uplifting aesthetic experiences (rasa, literally the 'juice' of the sentiment - taste, rather than sight, is apparently the prevailing symbol for the Indian experience of the aesthetic and the holy).

In bhakti practice an analogous transcendentalizing of mundane emotions occurs as the believer becomes an actor in the cosmic play that recapitulates Krishna's life and his various experiences of sublime love. The roles and the type of adoration they entail are five: awed worshipper, devoted slave, playful friend, and, the two most prevalent, erotic lover and nurturant mother. Each of the parts in the drama has its own conventional characteristics and specific
emotional tone which the devotee strives to manifest outwardly and experience inwardly, thereby attaining blissful union with the deity.

The cases used as illustrations of this process of self-transformation are fascinating and compelling. They include: the Brahmin Chaubes, whose habitual emotional stance of _mast_ (heated and heedless intoxication) is the defining characteristic of personal and group identity; the Vallabhites, 'gourmets of India', whose stupendous food offerings to Krishna are a metonymical means for the stimulation of maternal and nurturant feelings; the Chaitanyaites, who arouse within themselves the frustrated love of a _Gopi_ longing for the touch of her absent lover; and the temple dancer-prostitutes who lose personal identity in the compulsive practice of erotic dance, refining the base emotion of lust until it is transformed into union with the Divinity.

As with all good studies of Indian symbolism, these articles have a dizzying quality because of the marvelous intertwinnings and transmutations of the limitless aspects of God that make up the Hindu pantheon and inform Hindu practice. Though short and necessarily incomplete, these pieces give the _rasa_ of the complex totality; in addition, they make a very good argument that emotional states in Hinduism are not conceptualized or felt as personal surges of passion, but as dialectically constituted multiplex apprehensions of a relationship with God which, through cultivation and practice, can lead to bliss. From my perspective, these cases may be seen as illustrations of techniques of ecstasy - ways of overcoming existential issues of human alienation through stimulating merger in an emotionally charged group.

However, the emphasis in these essays is not on universal processes of ecstatic self-transformation, but on the distinctive construction of Indian emotional life and belief. The material presented argues forcefully for this distinctiveness in a manner that makes for a challenging volume, well-written and well worth reading.