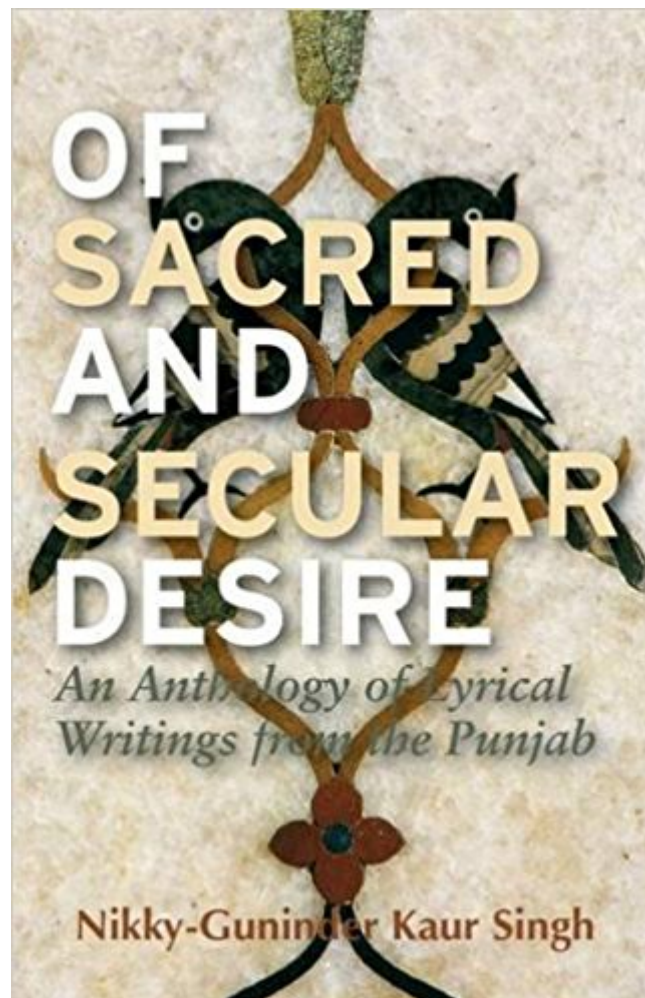




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Of Sacred And Secular Desire: An Anthology Of Lyrical Writings From The Punjab



Synopsis

The fertile land of the five rivers (Punjab in Persian) has persistently stirred the imagination of its peoples. Its story is the story of invasion. In 326 BCE, Alexander the Great marched through the Hindu Kush, conquered the verdant plains now divided between India and Pakistan, and stamped Greek cultural and linguistic influence on the region. Over the centuries, the lure of the Punjab attracted further waves of outsiders: Scythians, Sassanians, Huns, Afghans, Turks, Mughals, and - closer to our own times - the British. Many savage battles were fought. But at the same time, as different ethnic and religious groups came together and melded, the collective psyche of the Punjab was colored by vibrant new patterns, new worldviews, and new languages. Punjabi poetry is the dynamic result of these cross-cultural encounters. In her rich and diverse anthology, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh makes a major contribution to interfaith dialogue and comparative literary studies. Covering the entire spectrum of writers, from the artistic patterns of the first Punjabi poet (Baba Farid, 1173-1265) to feminist author Amrita Pritam (d. 2005), the volume serves as an ideal introduction to the three faiths of Sikhism, Islam, and Hinduism. Whether focusing on Sikh gurus or Sufi saints, it boldly illuminates the area's unique character, linguistic rhythms and celebrations, and will have strong appeal to undergraduate students of religion, literature, and South Asian studies, as well as general readers.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: I.B.Tauris (March 15, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1848858841

ISBN-13: 978-1848858848

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.8 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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