

the collection produces a more comprehensive understanding of the factors involved in sex work at the individual and societal levels. *Mothers, Mothering and Sex Work* offers a dynamic and important contribution to existing scholarship on both sex work and motherhood studies.

Laura Brightwell is currently a doctoral candidate in Gender, Feminist & Women's Studies at York University. She studies femmephobia in queer communities and works in the emerging field of critical femininity studies.

GRINGO GULCH: SEX, TOURISM, AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN COSTA RICA

Megan Rivers-Moore
Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 2016

REVIEWED BY CLARE ANSTOCK

Megan Rivers-Moore writes an ethnographic account of the Costa Rican sex industry's interaction with sex tourists and the state which provides upward social mobility for these active groups. The book focuses on the sex industry as it operates within the Gringo Gulch neighbourhood of San Jose, Costa Rica, an area in which the racialised and classed relationship between white sex tourists and local sex workers converge.

Gringo Gulch is divided into two parts, the first section, "Sex, Class, and Consumption", focuses on sex tourists and sex workers, and demonstrates the social mobility of these groups. Chapter 1 begins the discussion on sex work by "situating sex tourism within the tourist in-

dustry." Rivers-Moore demonstrates that while Costa Rica has been presented as an "exceptional" tourist destination, in part due to the idyllic landscape and its political peacefulness, the state has, nonetheless, distanced itself from the sex industry. Chapter 2 then challenges prominent discourse that assumes 'the almighty gringo' to be racist, misogynistic, and exploitative. By illuminating the complexity of hegemonic masculinity and demonstrating that Costa Rica offers tourists the "possibility of enhanced status and social mobility," Rivers-Moore demonstrates that the tourists are complex agents seeking to achieve more than just sex. Rather, sex tourists, despite little change to class or financial status, experience upward social mobility when they are treated by sex workers as being financially solvent. This chapter makes clear the concept of social mobility in the context of the sex tourism industry, in which participants are either actively benefiting from financial input, or made to feel as though they are financially more solvent in comparison to their experience in their home country. Further, participants regularly direct their earnings to family members who then benefit from an income, rendering participants and family members of those in the sex industry recipients of upward social mobility.

Both chapters 3 and 4 then focus on the voices and experiences of sex workers. Rivers-Moore situates sex work in the realm of care work by suggesting that sex work is inherently a work of care, and that sex work incorporates a range of caring acts before then highlighting the intersectional identities of sex workers as mothers and consumers while signifying the transferability of social mobility. Rivers-Moore demonstrates that the motivation to engage in sex work was more than to meet immediate financial needs, but instead the

neoliberal subject pursuing a heightened economic status, and boosting the status of those with whom they chose to impact.

Part two, "Regulating Sex in the Age of Neoliberalism," incorporates chapters 5 and 6. This section first demonstrates the role of the state's engagement with the sex industry in which the state simultaneously attempts to control sex workers under the guise of public health, while also realising the financial power of sex tourism. Rivers-Moore refers to this as 'permissive ambivalence', whereby the state turns a blind eye to sex work in order to reap financial benefits from the sex tourism industry. This argument is extended in chapter 6 where Rivers-Moore argues that the state's 'permissive ambivalence' is a strategy for social mobility in which the local economy profits from the economic input of sex tourists. Rivers-Moore then concludes *Gringo Gulch* by arguing that the sex tourist industry must "be understood fundamentally as a class project of social mobility for sex tourists, sex workers, and the state," by placing individual and macro social processes on the same trajectory of social mobility.

Compellingly, the author makes succinct connections between "macro-level political-economic transformations with lived experiences and practices of sexuality in people's everyday lives," demonstrating how the state and macro-social institutions have an effect on the inter-personal heteronormativity of Gringo Gulch. Particularly convincing is the author's connection between neoliberal policies of individualization embodied in Gringo Gulch, and the claim that while sex work is an ideal form of neoliberal work in that "they work independently and in direct competition with one another, and their income is based entirely on the market with no outside regulation by the state," sex work nonetheless

remains the most stigmatised method of generating an income, with sex workers attempting to hide the source of their income from their family and friends.

Overall, *Gringo Gulch* is an engaging and insightful read, and I would recommend it to anyone seeking to understand or challenge assumptions of sex tourists and sex workers. The book is also hugely beneficial in the understandings of social mobility and the role that the state plays in its 'permissive ambivalence' towards sex work.

Clare Anstock is an undergraduate student of social anthropology at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. She has completed a study abroad option at Carleton University, Ottawa, with a focus on courses within the women's and gender studies department.

GODDESS AND GOD IN THE WORLD: CONVERSATIONS IN EMBODIED THEOLOGY

Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016

**REVIEWED BY SAMUEL
WAGAR**

This is such a fascinating and exceptional book in each of its several facets: It's a paired theological autobiography, a condensed intellectual history of feminist theology by two of the most prominent feminist women theologians, exceptionally erudite and fascinating, and a dialogue between two people who have been close friends and collaborators for forty years around theological issues they have been talking about over a lifetime. It is structured with alternating chapters by each author followed by joint summary chapters

in each section, so the distinct voices of the two are clear throughout.

Christ is a leading Goddess movement theologian, Plaskow is a Jew. They model embodied theology by talking in detail about their personal encounters with significant theological writing, with their engagement in different communities of faith, with experiences of the divine, and with their personal lives. Rich autobiographies emerge of these two women in two bodies engaged in the world, changing and being changed by the ideas they encountered. The autobiographies are integrally tied into the history and development of feminist theology over the past forty years or more, and so the founding of the first feminist theology study groups (often by one or the other of them), key lectures and books (some written by the two of them, some not), encounters with significant figures in the development of the theology, all are involved here in and through their lives.

The discussion of why Plaskow remained a Jew and continues to struggle inside that religion with male gendered language and problematic symbolism, while Christ moved from Catholicism through liberal Protestant Christianity to the Goddess movement, is used as an examination of the different feminist theologies and approaches to tradition, images, and experiences of the divine and of community. It is not as simple as an intellectual choice, nor does it come down to any single personal factor—for example Plaskow is a lesbian and Christ is heterosexual, Christ is Goddess-centred, Plaskow is not.

Condensing fifty years of scholarship from each of them, the rich and deep engagement which they each have with their theological sources and with the development of their personal theologies, the continued engagement with current thinking around gender, intersectionality, and

queer theory, this book is a marvelous opening up of a whole field of intellectual work.

They both model, as well as simple brilliance and deep engagement and understanding, a respectful and kind exploration of their agreements and disagreements. Not only the obvious—that Plaskow continues in her tradition of birth and Christ has moved away from hers—but deep disagreements around the nature of the divine, with Christ opting for a personal Goddess of love and good and Plaskow a God seen as the non-personal 'ground of all being' which includes good and evil in the creative process. Theology needs consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, and clarity, all of which they provide—this is a deep but very clear work, with great care taken to build solid arguments and return to first principles where necessary.

Plaskow's arguments were stronger for me, although I am theologically closer to Christ. Christ seemed to use special pleading in developing her model of the Goddess as personal love, and relied for evidence in her social justice case on the discredited Ancient Matriarchy theories of Marija Gimbutas. Christ defines one of their commonalities as "inclusive monotheism" which "affirms an intuition of the unity of being combined with the recognition of the necessity of a plurality of images to reflect all the diversity and difference in the world." This is close to the common theological position in Wicca, my religion, and I have pulled a great deal from the work of both these women.

One problem with reading this splendid book is that I feel compelled to follow up on some of the references they cite. Which is going to substantially increase my home library's holdings in feminist theology, and drain my bank account. Christ's blending of Whitehead and Hartshorne's process theologies seems