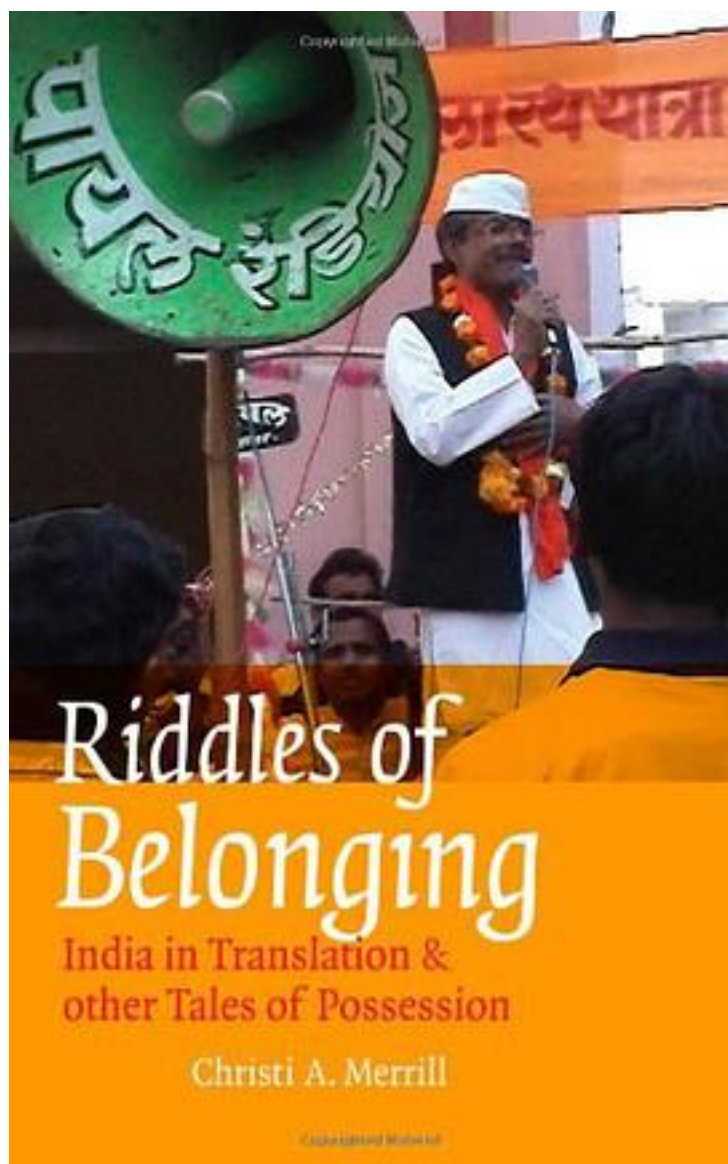


# Riddles of Belonging



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Can the subaltern joke? Christi A. Merrill answers by invoking riddling, oral-based fictions from Hindi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, and Urdu that dare to laugh at the details of contentious traditions often kept hidden - whether spouse abuse, ethnic violence, or the uncertain legacies of a divinely wrought sex change. Merrill argues that the playful lessons of these narratives offer insight into the networks of transnational relation connecting us across a sea of differences. A translator herself, Merrill uses these examples, especially from the work of Rajasthani writer Vijay Dan Detha, to investigate the expectation that translated work should allow the non-English-speaking subaltern to speak directly to the English-speaking reader. She plays with the trope of speaking to argue against treating a translated text as property and thus as a singular material object to be 'carried across' (as trans-latus implies.) She refigures it instead as a performative 'telling in turn' (from the Hindi word anuvad) to explain how a text might be multiply possessed.

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