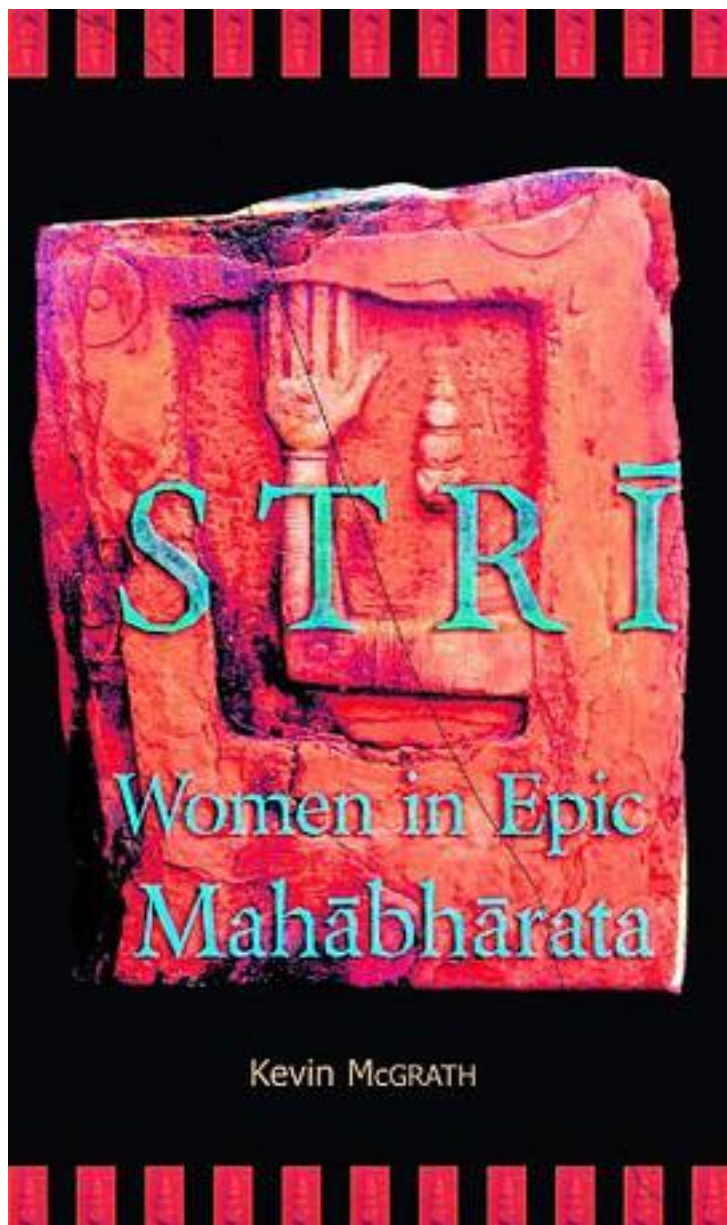


Stri



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This book is a study of heroic femininity as it appears in the epic Mahabharata, and focuses particularly on the roles of wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, on how these women speak and on the kinship groups and varying marital systems that surround them. It portrays those qualities that cohere about women in the poem, which are particular to them and which distinguish them as women, and describes how women heroes function as crucial speakers in the generation and maintenance of cultural value and worth. This includes men who have been transformed into women and women who have been reincarnated as men. The overall method accomplishes an ethnography of text, describing a special aspect of the bronze age preliterate and premonetary world as it is represented by the actions and metaphors of Mahabharata. References to contemporary Indian cinema and popular culture support the narrative of the book, bringing modern valence to the arguments.

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