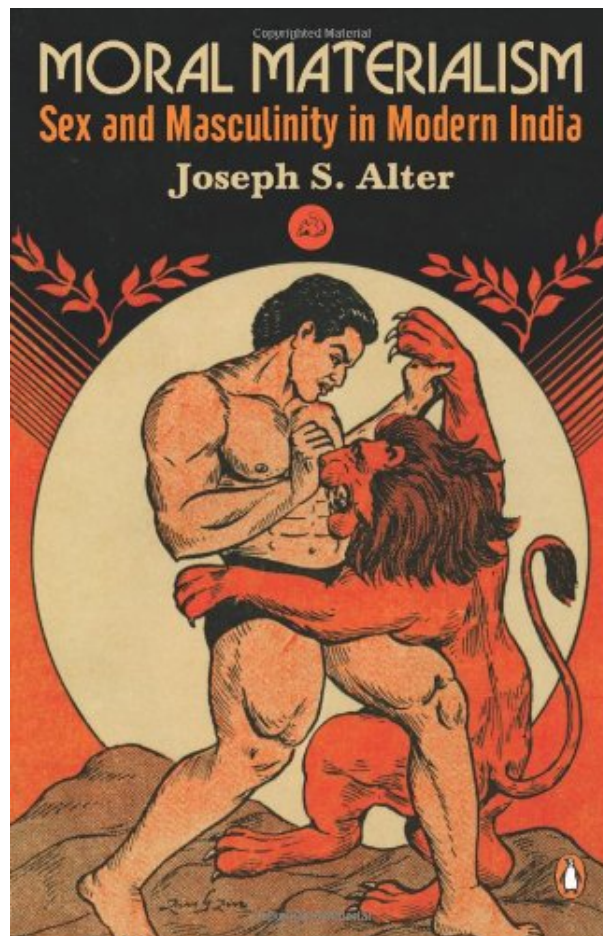
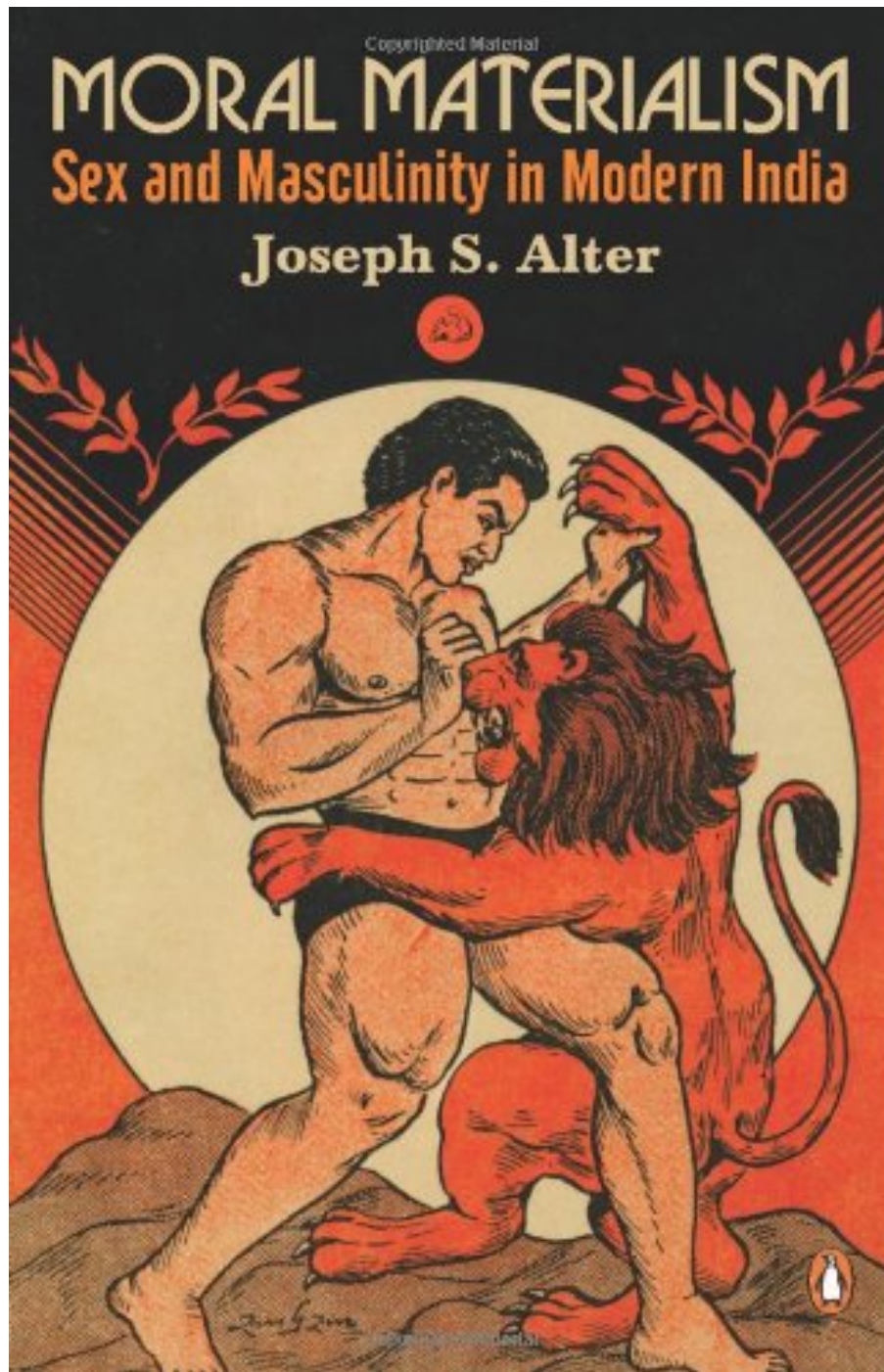


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## About the Author

Joseph S. Alter is an anthropologist who earned his doctoral degree from the University of California, Berkeley. He teaches at the University of Pittsburgh, where he is Professor and Department Chair. He was born in Landour, Uttarakhand and divides his time between Pittsburgh and the Allegheny mountains of western Pennsylvania and Mussoorie in the Himalayas.

For thirty years he has been conducting research on various aspects of society and culture in South Asia with a particular focus on physical fitness, sport, and the culture and history of medicine. He has written five books, including *The Wrestler's Body* (University of California Press, 1992), *Knowing Dil Das* (Penguin India 2010), *Gandhi's Body* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), *Asian Medicine and Globalization* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) and *Yoga in Modern India* (Princeton University Press, 2004). He has also published extensively on a range of sports, including kabaddi and jori/mugdal, on the cultural history and philosophy of Ayurveda and Unani medicine, and on the impact of colonial and post colonial development on the political economy of Mussoorie.

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A book that offers an elegant and inventive perspective on the multiple meanings of Indian masculinity

Masculine is most commonly defined in direct contrast to feminine . Masculinity is thus often seen as an antithesis of femininity, the two ideas apparently locked in a tussle over the allocation of characteristics.

Joseph Alter bypasses this opposition altogether in his original exploration of the concept of masculinity in modern India. He offers a strikingly new interpretation of Indian maleness , one that refers to itself, and not to an other . Through the distinct yet interrelated lenses of nationalism, yoga, wrestling, the concept of brahmacharya and male chastity, Alter examines the moral, material and biological roots of Indian masculinity. Unusually, it is the ideal of the celibate male that is the basis for this exploration.

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Excellent

By Amazon Customer

This book is excellent. The language is at times too academic, but there is a trove of information about sex

abstinence, energy and benefits of brahmacharya as taught by Indian sages (in relation to wrestling). It's not one of those Tao ideas - have 'sex' but just don't ejaculate (?). While this book could speak more to the worldly benefits of strict brahmacharya and sex abstinence in general (i.e. job competitiveness, productivity, focus, IQ etc), I understand it wasn't the author's objective so it's ok.

I consider this book to be a distillation of essential ideas behind brahmacharya (references span several pages), which are presented in the context of sports. Chapters like 'Seminal Truth' speak directly about the benefit of celibacy as viewed by Indian tradition. In addition, Indian teachers make no scruples about saying it directly - avoid ejaculation at all costs, even in wet dreams (resiliency of semen). The author doesn't explore alternative paths (thankfully) and stays true to the message of brahmacharya while exploring the topic from anthropological perspective.

Good work, a lot of info about brahmacharya/celibacy without prevarications and trying to make it somehow compatible with Western sex ideals i.e. ejaculate as frequently as you can. I recommend this work to all those who want to stay/become celibate to transmute/sublimate their semen energy for higher life purposes (improve IQ, job competitiveness, alertness etc)

A quote on true celibate/brahmachari:

"He is at the head of his class and wins in sports; he does everything he sets his mind to. With a single, well chosen word, he can silence others. With his melodious and influential voice he incorporates the good logic of wise men into his own discourse."

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