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Sommario/riassunto

One of the great riddles of cultural history is the remarkable parallel that exists between the peoples of Amazonia and those of Melanesia. Although the two regions are separated by half a world in distance and at least 40,000 years of history, their cultures nonetheless reveal striking similarities in the areas of sex and gender. In both Amazonia and Melanesia, male-female differences infuse social organization and self-conception. They are the core of religion, symbolism, and cosmology, and they permeate ideas about body imagery, procreation, growth, men's cults, and rituals of initiation. The contributors to this innovative volume illuminate the various ways in which sex and gender are elaborated, obsessed over, and internalized, shaping subjective experiences common to entire cultural regions, and beyond. Through comparison of the life ways of Melanesia and Amazonia the authors expand the study of gender, as well as the comparative method in anthropology, in new and rewarding directions.
