



Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism (Cambridge Studies in Ideology and Religion)

By Grace M. Jantzen

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In Western Christianity, the mystic was seen as having direct access to God, and therefore great authority. Dr. Jantzen discusses how men of power defined and controlled who should count as a mystic, and thus who would have power: women were pointedly excluded. The modern philosophical assumption that mysticism is essentially about intense subjective experiences is misguided. This book is the first on the subject to take issues of gender seriously, and to use them as a point of entry for a deconstructive approach to Christian mysticism.

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Review

"...an important contribution to understanding the nature of the history of mysticism as impacted by gender and social power struggles. Highly recommended." The Reader's Review

"Both historically and philosophically, this compelling, massively documented study is a superlative contribution to medieval, religious, and feminist studies." Choice

"Jantzen's book offers a strong and convincing critique of the category of mysticism as it has been constructed and employed by both modern theologians and philosophers of religion....In Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism, Jantzen has written an important book which should figure into all future discussions of mysticism and Politics." F.C. Bauerschmidt, Modern Theology

"This work is clear, fair, thorough, challenging, and engaging....the author serves the academic and faith communities well. The reader is constantly invited to think through the historical data and make new judgements....it deserves to be weighed seriously in any scholarly appreciation of mystical tradition and of spirituality." Barbara Paleczny, ssnd, The Canadian Catholic Review

"Jantzen's work....offers a wide-ranging discussion of the social construction of mysticism in Christianity from early exegetical spirituality, through the developments of Dionysius the Areopagite, a number of medieval case studies, to an examination of modern academic mis-readings of mystical texts. It is full of spicy critiques of other scholars, and is energized by a dauntless intention to unmask gender oppression wherever it may be lurking. ...Jantzen does an absolutely stellar job in relieving us once and for all...of the modern preoccupation with a putative "core" experience common universally to all mystics." Mark A. McIntosh, Pro Ecclesia

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