



Closet Devotions (Series Q)

Richard Rambuss

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Religion and sex, body and soul, sacred and profane: In *Closet Devotions*, Richard Rambuss traces the relays between these cultural formations by examining the issue of “sacred eroticism,” the literary or artistic expression of devotional feelings in erotic terms that has repeatedly occurred over the centuries. Rather than dismissing such expression as mere convention, Rambuss takes it seriously as a form of erotic discourse, one that gives voice to desires that, outside the sphere of sacred rapture, would otherwise be deemed taboo.

Through startling rereadings of works ranging from the devotional verse of the metaphysical poets (Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Traherne) to photographer Andres Serrano’s controversial “Piss Christ,” from Renaissance religious iconography to contemporary gay porn, Rambuss uncovers the highly charged erotic imagery that suffuses religious devotional art and literature. And he explores one of Christian culture’s most guarded (and literal) closets—the prayer closet itself, a privileged space where the vectors of same-sex desire can travel privately between the worshiper and his or her God.

Elegantly written and theoretically astute, *Closet Devotions* illuminates the ways in which sacred Christian devotion is homoeroticized, a phenomenon that until now has gone unexplored in current scholarship on religion, the body, and its passions. This book will attract readers across a wide array of disciplines, including gay and lesbian studies, literary theory and criticism, Renaissance studies, and religion.



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