



# Reading Spiritualities: Constructing and Representing the Sacred

*Dawn Llewellyn*

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The phenomenon of 'sacred text' has undergone radical deconstruction in recent times, reflecting how religion has broken out of its traditional definitions and practices, and how current literary theories have influenced texts inside the religious domain and beyond. *Reading Spiritualities* presents both commentary and vivid examples of this evolution, engaging with a variety of reading practices that work with traditional texts and those that extend the notion of 'text' itself. The contributors draw on a range of textual sites such as an interview, Caribbean literature, drama and jazz, women's writings, emerging church blogs, Neopagan websites, the reading practices of Buddhist nuns, empirical studies on the reading experiences of Gujarati, Christian and post-Christian women, Chicana short stories, the mosque, cinema, modern art and literature. These examples open up understandings of where and how 'sacred texts' are emerging and being reassessed within contemporary religious and spiritual contexts; and make room for readings where the spiritual resides not only in the textual, but in other unexpected places. *Reading Spiritualities* includes contributions from Graham Holderness, Ursula King, Michael N. Jagessar, David Jasper, Anthony G. Reddie, Michèle Roberts, and Heather Walton to reflect and encourage the interdisciplinary study of sacred text in the broad arena of the arts and social sciences. It offers a unique and well-focused 'snapshot' of the textual constructions and representations of the sacred within the contemporary religious climate - accessible to the general reader, as well as more specialist interests of students and researchers working in the crossover fields of religious, theological, cultural and literary studies.

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