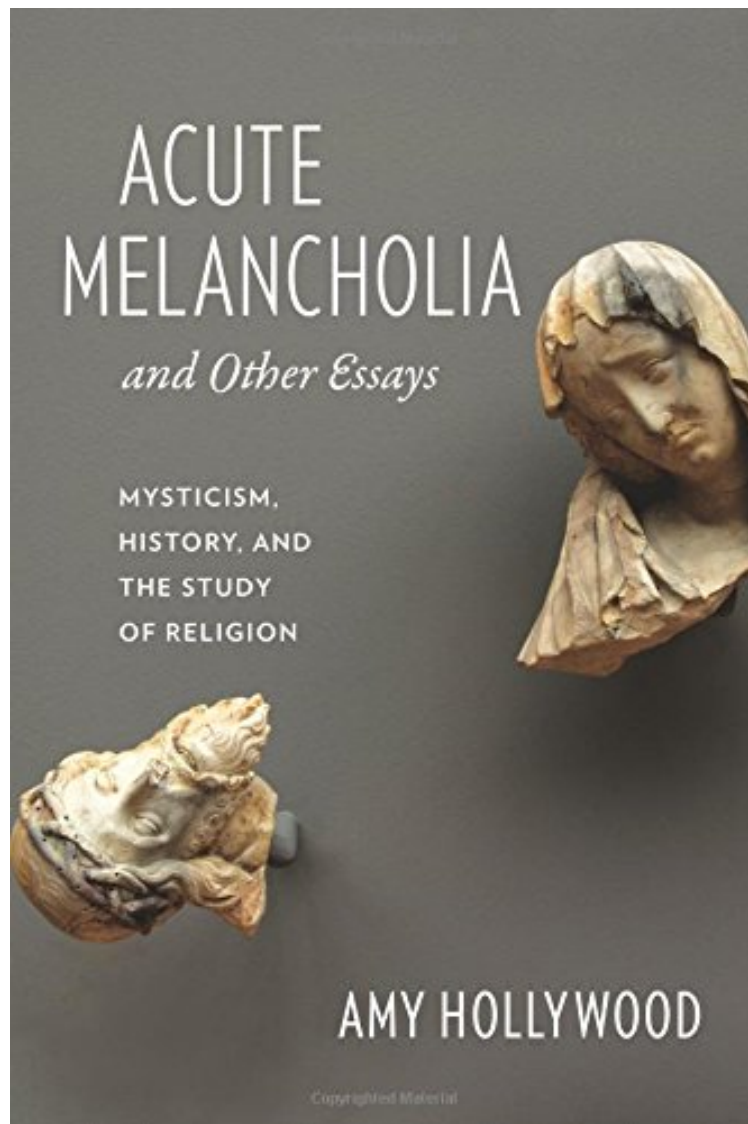


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Acute Melancholia and Other Essays: Mysticism, History, and the Study of Religion (Gender, Theory, and Religion)

Amy Hollywood

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Amy Hollywood : Acute Melancholia and Other Essays: Mysticism, History, and the Study of Religion (Gender, Theory, and Religion) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Acute Melancholia and Other Essays: Mysticism, History, and the Study of Religion (Gender, Theory, and Religion):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The most readable of all her books. By Elizabeth I have my Ph.D. in religion and have read all of Amy Hollywood's books. I'm writing this mostly for people that don't read reviews of her books in journals. In general, this is the most readable of her books. I realize that this is not necessarily what scholars are going for, but nonetheless for someone considering buying this book who might not be a specialist in Christian mysticism or Freudian thinking, it is quite possible to read this book and get a lot out of it even if you are not a specialist. It is also possible to get a lot out of this if you are a student or scholar in the field of religion, but the likes of Judith Butler and Amy Hollywood and feminist philosophy are not your normal area of focus. The book is a collection of essays that fit together, but can also be read on their own. Some are adapted from journal articles she has published and are somewhat traditional, but others are personal, there is some use of fiction, and it seems that she feels more comfortable in this book to write in a way that makes sense to her, rather than in a way that makes sense and legitimizes her in the academy. I have seen this with other scholars (for instance, Mark Jordan or Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza) where their later writing sort of relaxes into the voice and the passions that they have grown over the years in helpful and compelling ways. Of course, it can go awry (Mary Daly for instance, may she rest in peace), but it certainly does not in this book. I found the review that Judith Butler wrote on the back of the book beautiful, readable, and an accurate and helpful review of the book. I suggest you also read that if you are wondering if this book is for you. Overall, I very much recommend this not only to people who might normally read Hollywood's work, but also to much broader audiences who want to grapple with what religious practice can do to us - how we make sense of and live with religious history - and for those that want to more deeply understand "acute melancholia" in all its many names.

Acute Melancholia and Other Essays deploys spirited and progressive approaches to the study of Christian mysticism and the philosophy of religion. Ideal for novices and experienced scholars alike, the volume makes a forceful case for thinking about religion as both belief and practice, in which traditions marked by change are passed down through generations, laying the groundwork for their own critique. Through a provocative integration of medieval sources and texts by Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Talal Asad, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, this book redefines what it means to engage critically with history and those embedded within it.

Amy Hollywood's *Acute Melancholia and Other Essays* is a brilliant and challenging text that asks us all to read religious sources more carefully and productively as we try to fathom the contemporary meaning of critique, the ethical relations that bind us within an unfathomable horizon of loss. Known for her incisive and persuasive work in feminist religious studies, Hollywood takes us into new regions of theory and history by affirming the complex genres in which we think, the pervasive function of ritual within accounts of speech acts and symbolic actions, and the animated histories of metaphor and image. This book prompts us to think critically not only about conceits of the secular that are purified of religious content but also forms of psychoanalysis that discount Freud's writings on religion at a profound cost. The challenge delivered here is to become more capacious thinkers, to attend to ethical demands without a fugitive recourse to the narcissism of imagination, and to encounter the limits of what we can know about what we have lost or have yet to lose. At that limit emerges an ethical demand that allows us to think beyond the narrow divisions of genre and discipline that stop us from engaging in living thought. (Judith Butler, University of California, Berkeley) *Acute Melancholia and Other Essays* will be an essential resource for teachers, students, and all sorts of readers inside and outside of religious studies. Hollywood carefully and meticulously occupies the arguments of so many different thinkers from a wide variety of fields. She invites everyone to her seminar table, and suddenly whole avenues of inquiry unfold tantalizingly before you. Her work, in other words, is not only excellent and exciting it is also inspiring and provoking. (Michael Cobb, University of Toronto) Amy Hollywood is the rare scholar who is equally at home with medieval spiritual texts and modern critical theory. These essays that span her career show her virtuosic reading of complex religious and philosophical texts from the Middle Ages in the light of contemporary theories of reading, history, and sexuality. This collection offers delightful and informative reading for anyone interested in medieval Christianity. (E. Ann Matter, University of Pennsylvania) Hollywood's essays deftly navigate and bring into fruitful connection an astounding range of literatures from Medieval Christianity, anthropology, historiography, feminist theory, and philosophy of religion. They demonstrate what philosophy of religion can learn from careful historical work and why historical work requires critical self-consciousness of a sort that philosophical analysis brings. The prose is learned, sensitive, elegant, and precise; and the result is a major contribution to theorizing central topics in the study of religion as well as the humanities more generally from practice to experience to sexuality. *Acute Melancholia and Other Essays* deserves broad and repeated reading. (Thomas A. Lewis, Brown University) Hollywood makes far-reaching interventions into medieval studies, philosophy, theology, religious studies, feminist and queer studies, and psychoanalysis in this bracing collection of essays. But in my view her most profound thinking concerns critique itself: her insistence that its sources include not only sorrow and anger but also joy is a proposition that could, indeed, lead to lives more fully lived. (Carolyn Dinshaw, New York University) A valuable addition to the literature in a variety of disciplines.... Highly recommended. (CHOICE) About the Author Amy

Hollywood is the Elizabeth H. Monrad Professor of Christian Studies at Harvard Divinity School. She is the author of *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* and the award-winning *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*. She is the coeditor, with Patricia Z. Beckman, of *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*.