



Wounds of Love: The Mystical Marriage of Saint Rose of Lima

By Frank Graziano

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The Peruvian mystic St. Rose of Lima (Isabel Flores y Oliva, 1586-1617) was canonized in 1671 as the first saint of the New World and remains the object of widespread devotion today. In this engrossing new study, Frank Graziano uses the example of St. Rose to explore the meaning of female mysticism and the way in which saints are products of their cultures.

Virginit, austerity, eucharistic devotion, incessant mortification, and mystical marriage to Christ characterized the devotional regimen that structured St. Rose's entire life. Many of her mystical practices echo the symptoms of such modern psychological disorders as masochism, depression, hysteria, and anorexia nervosa. Graziano offers a sophisticated argument not only for the origins and meaning of these behaviors in Rose's case, but also for the reason her culture venerated them as signs of sanctity. In the process he explores a wide range of themes, from the idea of suffering as an expression of love to the assimilation of childhood trauma through religious repetition.

Graziano also offers a penetrating analysis of the politics of Rose's canonization. He finds that her mystical union with God--bypassing the institutional channels of sacrament and priestly mediation--was inherently subversive to the bureaucratized Church. Canonization was a cooptation by which Rose's competing claim to Christ was integrated into the Catholic canon.

The book concludes with a fascinating exploration of mystical eroticism, with its intense experiences of vision and ecstasy. The eroticized suffering of many mystics is shown to be very human in origin: the mystic's wounded love is projected onto a God conceived to accommodate it.

Wounds of Love is based on a decade of research in archives, rare books, and an extraordinary range of secondary sources. Introducing an innovative method that integrates history, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and clinical psychology, this compelling work offers a bold new interpretation of female mysticism.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Wounds of Love* provides a superb description and definition of the components and history of hagiography and female mysticism. [This book] not only elucidates the events specific to Rose of Lima's life, but it also clarifies many issues related to the construction of sanctity and female mysticism. It is vital and welcome addition on Latin-American colonial women and society." --*Renaissance Quarterly*

"It is very difficult not to be impressed by the display of erudition and the range of problems concerning sanctity that Graziano treats in this ambitious book. A work such as this is indispensable...Its exhaustive research in primary and secondary sources, and the care with which they are duly cited, make this book an exemplary academic work." --*Hispanic American Historical Review*

"Adds important new dimensions to Saint Rose of Lima and her representations in New World and European Catholic cultures." --*The Americas*

"Much more than a biography of a particular saint, *Wounds of Love: The Mystical Marriage of Saint Rose of Lima* is a well-researched treatment of Catholic mysticism in the early modern era. It will be of interest to psychology and Latin American studies collections as well as religious collections."-- *Academia*

"Among the many riches of this book is the vivid sense it gives of the encompassing spirituality in which many lived in the Hispanic world of Rose of Lima's time. In elucidating Rose's behavior and its reception by commoners, State, and Church, Graziano offers his reader a cornucopia of learning ranging from the symbolism of classical times to recent psychology-a cornucopia made doubly attractive by the suppleness of his thought and liveness of his prose." --Peter J. Bakewell, Edmund and Louise Kahn Professor of History, Southern Methodist University

"It is fascinating to watch how Graziano develops his project with both a genuine respect for the person and culture of Rose, and a basic assumption that they were deluded. Those looking for a way into these perspectives will appreciate this in-depth case study."--Mary Frohlich, *Catholic Theological Union*

"Frank Graziano's *Wounds of Love* is a remarkably complex book, one that weaves the history of the colonial cultural politics of the beatification and canonization of America's first saint (Santa Rosa of Lima), with the larger history of the 'saintly' practices of women, primarily bodily practices that are simultaneously embraced

and abhorred by society. Drawing upon a diverse body of literature from various disciplines including Religious Studies, Medieval History, Psychoanalysis, and Art History, Graziano does not so much argue from a particular analytic viewpoint or to a single conclusion, but rather he presents to the reader, through Saint Rose, the necessary complicity between the individual and society in the formation of a saint, and the extreme costs that a successful one has on those who try to emulate it but fail." --Thomas B.F. Cummins, Dumbarton Oaks Professor of the History of Pre-Columbian and Colonial

About the Author

Frank Graziano is the John D. MacArthur Professor of Hispanic Studies at Connecticut College. His previous books include *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, and Radical Christianity in the Argentine "Dirty War"* (1992), *The Lust of Seeing: Themes of the Gaze and Sexual Rituals in the Fiction of Felisberto Hernández* (1997), and *The Millennial New World* (Oxford, 1999).

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