

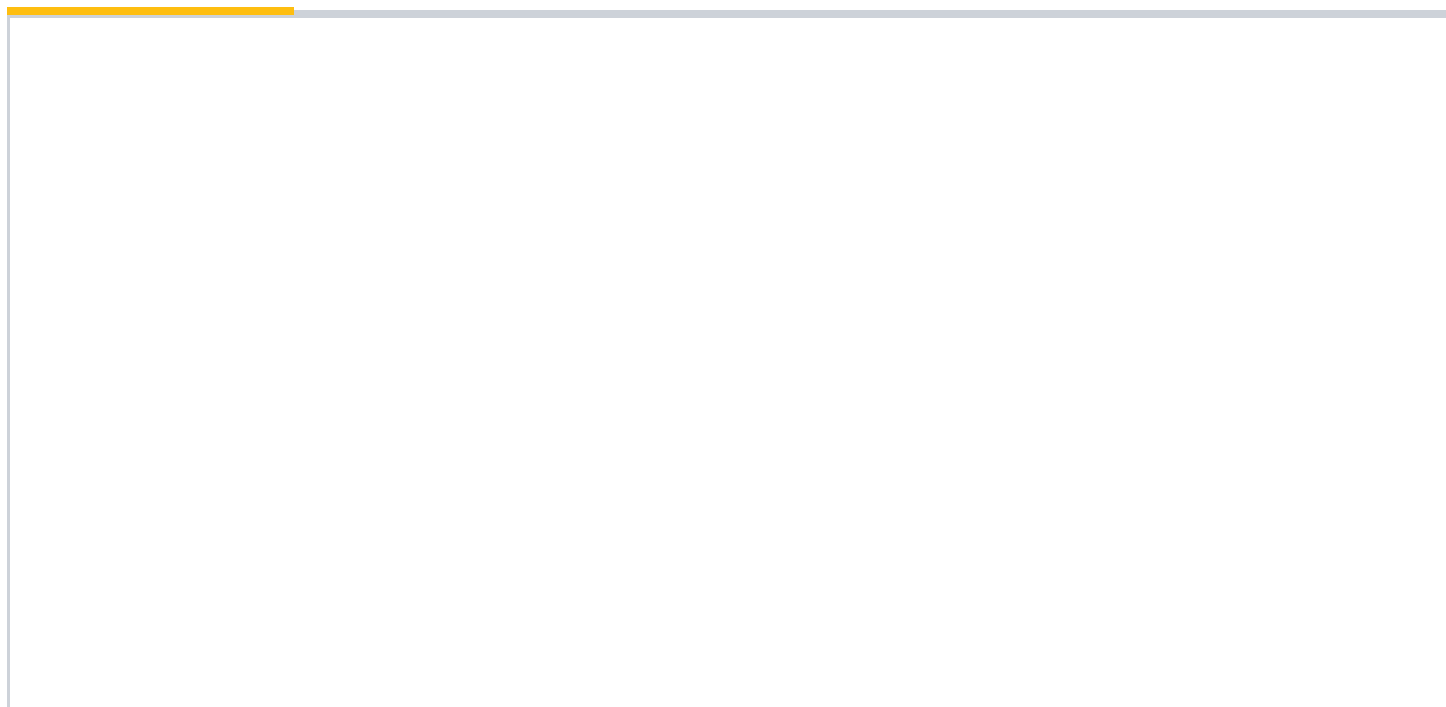


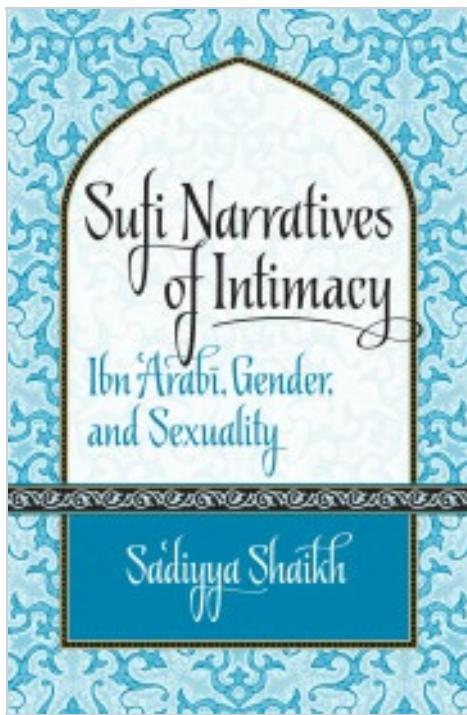
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Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn 'Arabī, Gender, and Sexuality

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Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn 'Arabi, Gender, and Sexuality

Sa'diyya Shaikh

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SUMMARY

Current gender debates in Muslim societies, including questions of women's rights in marriage and divorce, the politics of hijab, and women's leadership of ritual prayer, are underpinned by specific, paradigmatic assumptions regarding human nature, gender, and the mandates of Islam. In this feminist analysis, Sa'diyya Shaikh undercuts these paradigms by arguing that Sufi discourses offer contemporary Muslims rich, multi-textured, and largely untapped resources with which to engage ongoing challenges of gender equality. As Shaikh demonstrates, in particular through the illustrative example of the writings of thirteenth-century Muslim poet, mystic, and legal scholar, Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabī, Sufi thought ultimately asserts that men and women are equally capable of attaining divinely ordained spiritual completeness. Indeed, in Ibn al-'Arabī's writings, though in many ways reflective of the normative

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