

is a function of all she represents: love object, mother, valorizing component of masculine desire. In Daniel's corpus, Cholakian finds the Lacanian dialectic of eye and gaze, penis envy and the Oedipal complex. Inspired by Jernigan, he sees the lexico-syntactical reiteration as erotic lack, the syntactical reductionism as retreat-escape and trobar clus as the marriage of both in the troubadour's subconscious.

The sixth chapter focuses on Guiraut Riquier's psycho-drama of the pastorela series and a poem to the Virgin. The two distinct women of the pastorela, the seductress and the savior, merge as the seductress (Eve) becomes a mother (Mary). This process of feminine desexualization mirrors the poet's fear of death, but the poet has conquered Eve and Mary by maternalizing the woman. In the Virgin poem, the poet is saved by the love of the woman who intercedes for him. The triangle of unconditional love is formed: child-mother-father (god). This is the Lacanian desire of the mother who is here empowered by masculine authority (the logos).

For Cholakian the androcentric subtext equates the love triangle of lover, lady, gilos (or implied masculine audience) with the classical Oedipal family triangle.

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Elizabeth Robertson. Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience.
Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990. Pp. xii, 227

In this innovative study Robertson argues that the style, structure, and thematic interests of an important group of Middle English devotional works reflect their male authors' assumptions about the nature of women and the potential for a specifically feminine spirituality. Focusing on the so-called AB texts, Robertson locates the evidence for the interaction of gender and genre in these works' shared possession of a "pragmatic, nonteological, and emotional" style which "stresses the concrete and personal over the abstract and the universal" (pp. 10-11). As it describes how these stylistic features came to be associated with the particular needs and expectations of an unlettered female audience, Robertson's study also explores the impact of philosophy, theology, and spirituality on vernacular textual production in medieval England.

The book frames its discussions of individual works with chapters that broadly contextualize the literary, social, and theological milieu of the AB texts. Chapter One focuses on the female audience and the style of the AB texts in several different but overlapping contexts: the conditions for textual production after the Norman Conquest; the AB texts' relation to continental and native traditions; and the implications of illiteracy for a feminine spirituality. Chapter Two provides an overview of the anchoritic life for women, considering its development in light of spiritual trends and social options available to women in thirteenth-century England. In Chapter Three, Robertson sets forth the ideas about women that shaped medieval views of female spirituality, particularly the classical and early Christian association of women with matter, sense perception, and the body, and the consequent emphasis on physical purity as a central criterion of female holiness. Focusing on the Ancrene Wisse, Chapter Four describes how the style of this guide for anchoresses "reflects a circumscribed view of women's spiritual potential" (p. 45) which relies upon a definition of women's essential nature as physical bodies. In

Chapter Five Robertson shows how the author of Hali Meidenhad transformed conventions of the treatise on virginity to establish a spiritual model for women rooted in the material circumstances of everyday life. The lives of saints Katherine, Margaret, and Juliana are the subject of Chapter Six, which argues that the triumphant feminine spirituality illustrated by these lives is nevertheless determined by male assumptions about women's limitations in the religious sphere. Chapter Seven discusses "Sawles Warde," arguing that its adaptation of the Anselmian homily "De Custodia Interioris Hominis" evidences its author's understanding of the spiritual needs of an audience of female contemplatives. In Chapter Eight Robertson compares the style of the AB texts with that of Anglo-Saxon prose religious works, proposing that similarities between the two may be explained by their male authors' shared perceptions about the spiritual needs and capacities of the marginal groups—women and the unlettered laity—who formed their respective audiences. Chapter Nine reviews the debt of the AB texts to twelfth-century theology and philosophy, arguing that the physicalized spirituality of these texts is best understood in relation to that century's valorization of the physical world, which was evidenced in such widely disparate areas as scientific thinking, scriptural exegesis, and interpretation of the Incarnation.

The tenth and final chapter exemplifies this book's larger engagement with questions of central relevance to recent feminist theory. Here Robertson considers what it means to speak of a female style when such a style can also be seen in other, later texts obviously composed for different occasions and for audiences of mixed gender. In these terms, how should we understand the usefulness of gender as a category of analysis? Similarly, the book's analysis of the practical and cultural significance for medieval women of a spirituality grounded by the body may be seen in terms of contemporary debates about body, gender, and essence in feminist theory. As Robertson suggests, the complex and widely differing valences of body and physicality, especially female physicality, in the Middle Ages, prompt us to consider how best to apply current feminist paradigms when we advance interpretations about the symbolic and real power of women in such a historically distant era.

Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience will be of interest to scholars and students of medieval literature, feminist criticism and theory, and the history of spirituality and religion. Writing an important and previously neglected chapter in the history of English prose, Robertson brings the AB texts into a lively dialogue with the literary traditions and cultural forces that shaped them. At the same time, her book illustrates the valuable contribution that feminist criticism can make to a revised history of medieval English literature.

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Thelma S. Fenster and Mary Carpenter Eler. Poems of Cupid, God of Love. Christine de Pizan's *Epistre au dieu d'Amours* and *Dit de la Rose*; Thomas Hoccleve's *The Letter of Cupid*; editions and translations; with George Sewell's *The Proclamation of Cupid*. E.J. Brill: Leiden, New York, 1990.

The only awkward element of this book is its full title, an unavoidable itemizing of