



The Genre of Medieval Patience Literature: Development, Duplication, and Gender (The New Middle Ages)

Robin Waugh

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This project records the development and history of medieval patience literature by identifying and mapping the important shift in early patience literature from a focus on male and female sufferers to a focus more on female sufferers in particular. The argument employs feminist revisions of genre-theory to show how specific works fit into the evolution of the genre, and identifies and defines the important concept of counterfeit consciousness. The book first defines the genre through examples of patience literature from the martyrologies to the *Legenda aurea*, where one may note the emergence of feminine space as a representation of women's expression. Then, through a revision of the conventional understanding of Grisilde's passivity, the book shows how Chaucer's Clerk's Tale works as a sophisticated *reductio ad absurdum* of the patience genre and how Christine de Pizan's *Griselda-tale* works as a precise satire of male understandings of patience literature and of knightly romances. The project then examines Margery Kempe's trials as examples of the displacement of feminine space into Margery's own version of a shrine. No-one has previously described the genre of patience literature, while this book, intended primarily for an academic audience, increases recognition of specific roles for women in the Middle Ages, consolidates a number of innovative research trends, and makes an important contribution to literary history.

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