



Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory: Bodies of Discourse (The New Middle Ages)

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Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory, the first book-length treatment of the character, examines the Pardoner in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales from the perspective of both medieval and twentieth-century theories of sex, gender, and erotic practice. Sturges argues for a discontinuous, fragmentary reading of this character and his tale that is genuinely both premodern and postmodern. Drawing on theorists ranging from St. Augustine and Alain de Lille to Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Sturges approaches the Pardoner as a representative of the construction of historical - and sexual - identities in a variety of historically specific discourses, and argues that medieval understandings of gender remain sedimented in postmodern discourse.

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- Rank: #4770149 in Books
- Brand: Robert Stuart Sturges
- Published on: 2000-03-02
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.52" h x .94" w x 5.68" l, .93 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 232 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Many journal articles have been published about the sexuality of the Pardoner in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, but this is the first book-length study of the character. Along with its extensive examination of the Pardoner's sexuality, the book delves into medieval society's perception of and attitudes toward ambiguous gender. In fact, this effort, part of "The New Middle Ages" series, which emphasizes transdisciplinary studies of medieval cultures, focuses more on medieval views of gender than on analyzing Chaucer's work. Most readers would find a selection of journal articles about Chaucer's Pardoner more useful and accessible. Sturges (English, Univ. of New Orleans) has published numerous articles and one book about medieval French literature. Because his vocabulary is very specialized and his literary quotations are not translated, readers must be familiar with Middle English and with gender-studies terminology. Recommended for academic libraries only.

-Shana C. Fair, Ohio Univ., Zanesville

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Review

"...the arguments...throughout the book are presented lucidly...the book is never dull." --*College Literature*

About the Author

Robert S. Sturges is Professor of English at the University of New Orleans.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Daniel Trimble:

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