

Julian of Norwich's Legacy: Medieval Mysticism and Post-Medieval Reception. Edited by Sarah Salih and Denise N. Baker. The New Middle Ages. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Pp. xiii + 217. ISBN: 978023066678.

In *Julian of Norwich's Legacy*, Sarah Salih and Denise N. Baker have brought together a fascinating group of essays on the transmission, reception, and interpretation of Julian of Norwich and her writing. The volume consists of an introduction by the editors that, in addition to providing the expected summaries of the contributions, usefully presents a concise account of the medieval and early modern manuscripts containing the Short and Long Texts. The innovative scholarship that marks nearly every one of the collection's ten essays makes this volume not only a must-read for scholars of Julian and of medievalism but also a book that will interest scholars in many literary and cultural fields.

The volume opens with an updated version of Alexandra Barratt's 1995 essay "How Many Children Had Julian of Norwich?" The revised essay examines the religious, political, and cultural agendas that have informed editions and versions of Julian's texts from Serenus Cressy's 1670 printed edition through the most recent editing projects of, on the one hand, Anna Maria Reynolds and Julia Bolton Holloway, and, on the other hand, Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins. She observes that until the nineteenth century, the Short Text was unknown and the Long Text circulated "mainly among English Catholics" (15). In nineteenth-century editions, competing Catholic and "proto-Protestant" Julians began to emerge, competing versions that twentieth-century editions continued to perpetuate, even as editing practices became more scholarly. It is fitting that Barratt's opening essay outlines this textual tradition of competing Julians, since many of the essays that follow explicitly address the ways in which diverse groups create Julians in their own images and for their own purposes.

Barratt's essay is followed by Jennifer Summit's brilliant piece "From Anchorhold to Closet: Julian of Norwich in 1670 and the Immanence of the Past." Summit analyzes the seventeenth-century origins of historicism and contemplation as "two dominant but competing modes of consuming medieval texts" (30). She explores the cultural and political environment in which Cressy's 1670 edition of the Long Text appeared, arguing that the edition had a polemical purpose. As she notes, it is significant that Cressy dedicates his edition to an English laywoman, Lady Mary Blount, and that he directs Lady Mary to consider Julian as her contemporary. The edition is thus "an exile's return" (31), serving to make Catholicism English rather than foreign.

Chapters three and four address the influences of Julian of Norwich on W. B.

Yeats and T. S. Eliot respectively. Anthony Cuda argues that during Yeats's "middle period" Julian provided "not only salient tropes and figures but a model for sustaining the two oppositional forces of passion and precision, emotion and logic" (50). He presents compelling evidence from the descriptive catalogue of Yeats's library and his nonfiction prose to illustrate Yeats's knowledge of the Middle Ages generally and Julian specifically, something to which scholars have paid scant attention. Jewel Spears Booker's contribution consists of a careful close reading of Eliot's *Four Quartets* situated in dialogue with the events of World War II. Booker makes a strong case for the central place of Julian in Eliot's representations of evil, transcendence, and atonement.

Chapter five considers another author's engagement with Julian in dealing with the perennial philosophical problem of evil. Denise N. Baker examines the role Julian of Norwich has in Annie Dillard's "meditative narrative" (88) *Holy the Firm*. She argues that the way in which Dillard resolves the problem of evil "bears some resemblance to Julian's and reveals her profound understanding of the medieval mystical tradition" (91). In particular, Dillard's concept of Holy the Firm is connected with Julian's concept of the ground of being, though, as Baker notes, there is a crucial difference, in that for Dillard, the ground is a material substance, while for the Julian, it is a spiritual substance.

Susannah Mary Chewning's essay "Julian of Norwich in Popular Fiction" analyzes several novels written since the mid-twentieth century that include Julian, focusing on their representations of Julian's biography; their portrayal of the anchoritic life; their treatment of medieval female, vernacular authority; and their interpretations of Julian's theology. Her essay provides a useful introduction to works that may not be well known to many scholars of Julian. Chewning argues that these contemporary, popular authors create versions of Julian and her life as they would like to see it, versions with which they and their readers can readily identify.

Explorations of other Julians with whom particular authors and audiences can identify are at the heart of chapters seven and eight. Jacqueline Jenkins examines three late twentieth-century plays dramatizing Julian's life and writings. Her essay closes with a theoretically sophisticated reading of the cell as a device for the stage, considering contemporary performance art and "visible invisibility" (123). In chapter eight, Christiania Whitehead analyzes the constructions of Julian in diverse religious traditions since the 1960s: Anglican, American Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic. She perceptively observes that precisely because Julian has no medieval cult, no longstanding continuous tradition of devotion, she "bursts upon the twentieth century with a kind of innocence" (132) as malleable material to be shaped to serve different ideologies.

The book's final two chapters treat material presences of Julian in contemporary Norwich. Sarah Salih's innovative essay addresses representations of the "composite phenomenon that we call Julian of Norwich" and her texts in the material and visual culture of Norwich. Focusing on the overlap of heritage tourism and pilgrimage, she considers Julian's Cell at the reconstructed St. Julian's Church and Norwich Cathedral. She also analyzes the souvenirs—mugs, magnets, candle holders, and the like—on offer in the gift shop at the Julian Centre. The book closes with an essay by Sarah Law, a former administrator of the Centre. Law presents an interesting snapshot of the range of activities—devotional, academic, and secular—that take place at the Centre and the diverse range of reactions and responses exhibited by visitors.

This is one of the best collections of essays I have encountered in recent years. The organizing concept is compelling and superbly executed. Every essay is a good fit for the collection, and the essays speak to each other while avoiding repetition. Not only is this volume of value to students and scholars of medieval literature and medievalism, but it should also be required reading for all would-be editors of collections of essays.

*Nancy Bradley Warren
Florida State University*