

antipapal sentiments are clearly evident throughout her autobiography, perhaps no better illustrated than by the pivotal theme that her life narrative revolves around—intense doubts about salvation and temptations to convert to Catholicism in her late twenties that created a personal spiritual crisis around 1608. It was a crisis that led Fitzherbert to have spectacular hallucinations and delusions that included her notion that she was the Antichrist, that the people she associated with represented physical manifestations of the devil, and that her family was part of a grand conspiracy to have her burned alive. Reviewing the seventeenth-century debates over the difference between madness and the afflicted soul, Hodgkin asserts in the introduction that Fitzherbert sought in her autobiography to present her crisis as a spiritual struggle that confirmed her elect status as one of God's saints rather than a bout of mental illness. The fact that Fitzherbert chose spiritual autobiography as the literary means to achieve this goal was in many ways creative since the genre only became a widespread and popular form of life writing in England after the Civil War. As Hodgkin, however, makes clear, Fitzherbert believed both in the concept of the exemplary life and that her experience could potentially assist others in the cultivation of their personal piety, a belief that she shared with her contemporaries who produced life writings like spiritual diaries or biographies. Consequently, Fitzherbert strove to have the widest possible readership for her autobiography in the 1630s, enlisting the services of scribes and the librarian John Rouse to produce two edited versions of her original narrative and have them deposited at the Bodleian Library and Sion College Library. Upon her death in the 1640s, she bequeathed the autograph text of her life narrative to the Bodleian, ensuring that three manuscript copies would survive and allow us access to an immensely fascinating life of a never-married woman from early modern England.

Hodgkin deserves praise for attempting to increase our access even further with her edition, but there are aspects of her analysis and approach that she could have pushed a bit more. In particular, while it is true that Fitzherbert had a strong desire to present an exemplary life for others to read, Hodgkin tends not to discuss fully the possible spiritual benefits that Fitzherbert may have found from reading her own autobiography and using it as an aid to remember the active presence that she surely must have believed God had in her existence. Furthermore, an even more extensive discussion of Fitzherbert's godly piety and her views of the Church of England would have only enhanced our understanding of her life and the production of the autobiography. Finally, although a transcription in modernized language certainly removes barriers for nonspecialists, such as undergraduates, one wonders whether the cost of a printed edition serves as just another barrier that perhaps an online edition would not produce. Yet these are mere quibbles with an otherwise useful and worthwhile book. Indeed, Hodgkin has continued her demonstration that she is the leading scholar of Dionys Fitzherbert.

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V. A. KOLVE. *Telling Images: Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative II*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009. Pp. 408. \$65.00 (cloth).

This collection is the culmination of V. A. Kolve's long and substantial engagement with the interrelation of text and image in Chaucer's writings. Its subtitle announces that *Telling Images* is intended to serve as the second installment of Kolve's most influential work, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative: The First Five Canterbury Tales* (Stanford, CA, 1984). Unlike that earlier volume, however, which is a tightly focused study of the opening sequence of the *Canterbury Tales*, the current volume ranges more broadly, drawing together a collection of Kolve's lectures and essays produced over the last three decades: the earliest of the chapters, a classic and deeply insightful study of the "Second Nun's Tale" and an analysis of Cleopatra and Alceste in the *Legend of Good Women*, actually predate Kolve's

1984 volume but were excluded from it due to that book's exclusive focus on the opening sequence of the *Canterbury Tales*. *Telling Images* includes five previously published chapters on Chaucer's writings, including *Troilus and Criseyde* (2003), the *Legend of Good Women* (1981), the "Friar's Tale" (1990), the "Franklin's Tale" (1991), and the "Second Nun's Tale" (1981). A concluding essay, on the theme of the fool in medieval literature (1997), also addresses Chaucer's *Troilus* in addition to a range of other medieval literature. Original to this volume is a pair of interlinked chapters devoted to the "Merchant's Tale."

The importance of Kolve's work lies in his ability to draw together a range of medieval images in order to provide a rich and detailed backdrop to literature of the period. By this means, Kolve exposes what he identifies as the "iconographic 'literacy'" or "culturally shared habit of mind" (xvi) common to medieval readers and writers. This iconographic approach is sometimes compared to the allegorical reading practices associated with D. W. Robertson, but Kolve is careful to distinguish his methodology from those exegetical approaches even as he acknowledges his debt to Robertson (xxi–xxii, 258 n. 10). Kolve is consistent in his methodology, in the essays collected in *Telling Images* as in his 1984 volume, beginning with a rich and detailed overview of the possible forms of the iconographic image in question before turning to a reading of how that image is evoked in Chaucer's poetry. As Kolve puts it, the book "surveys, chapter by chapter, a range of images such as those the poet and his audience might have summoned to mind, before suggesting how Chaucer may have used that tradition within a specific poem" (xxiii). This approach invites the interesting question of how readers' interpretations might sometimes have been at odds with the intentions of the poet, a topic Kolve only begins to address in his closing essay.

Kolve's focus on what he calls the "symbolic dimension" (1) of Chaucer's text causes him sometimes to give short shrift to the ways that medieval people talked about the acquisition of image-based knowledge. This is particularly apparent in the often shallow treatment of philosophical and scientific theories of vision and intellection, to which Kolve alludes but does not address in any substantial way (257 n. 5, 265 n. 38, 316 n. 50). He tends to rely on the important work of Mary Carruthers on medieval memory instead of engaging with the primary texts on imagination and perception that would be more directly relevant to his topic (2–3, 192, 261 n. 11). What Kolve does do extraordinarily well, however, is to first identify a key dramatic, vivid moment in Chaucer's text and then give a sense of the overwhelming profusion of iconographic options that were available to the poet and to his readers. This approach is particularly successful in the paired set of essays on the "Merchant's Tale," written especially for this volume. One excavates the imaginative richness that underlies Chaucer's tale, focusing on not only the calendrical imagery underlying the aged January and his nubile young spouse May but also the Gemini twins motif. As Kolve shows in detail, the homoeroticism of the paired male Gemini image gave way in later medieval iconography to scenes of amorous heterosexual coupling. He goes on to relate these twin images to portrayals of the fecund tree of Jesse in order to produce a reading of the "Merchant's Tale" that brings out the natural imperatives that drive the work. Like the reading of the "Miller's Tale" in Kolve's 1984 book, *Telling Images* provides a reading of Chaucer's portrayal of the sexual coupling of youth and age that emphasizes the forward reproductive thrust of the natural order.

As a collection of essays produced over a long period of time, *Telling Images* sometimes misses opportunities to be synthetic: for example, the account of the paradise garden offered in chapter 6 as a context to the "Franklin's Tale" could easily have been linked to the focus on the Edenic garden of the "Merchant's Tale" featured in chapters 4 and 5. In spite of this lack of synthesis, the essays gathered here remain valuable for the way in which they illuminate the range of iconographic possibilities available to the medieval reader, vividly conjured up by both Kolve's descriptions and the 153 black-and-white illustrations. Perhaps the most stimulating aspect of this volume is the slightly audacious direction taken in its concluding essay, "God-Denying Fools." In the preface, Kolve explicitly acknowledges both

this audacity and his own level of personal engagement: in this chapter, he writes, “I privilege my personal situation for the first time, confessing to a dilemma I have never wholly resolved: how to teach and write ‘from within’ Christian systems of thought without appearing to acquiesce in beliefs I do not share” (xvii). Kolve shows how the figure of the fool who denies the existence of God was imagined by medieval people, but then he swerves away from a prescriptive, almost Robertsonian reading to instead produce a “*resistant* reading—a reading ‘against the grain’” (238). This mode of reading gives voice to the image of the God-denying fool, giving it a “dignity and importance” inconceivable to those who illustrated the manuscript. This striking direction whets the reader’s appetite for Kolve’s forthcoming publication of a book on this topic. *Telling Images* is the work of a master of the field, whose command of medieval iconography is profound and whose sense of Chaucer’s poetry emerges from a lifetime dedicated to teaching his works.

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WILLIAM MCCARTHY. *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008. Pp. 792. \$62.00 (cloth).

Of all the “female Jacobins” who entered the late-eighteenth-century literary fray, the poet Anna Letitia Barbauld (née Aikin, 1743–1825) may be the most difficult to place. Although this ardent radical and committed Dissenter minced no words in promoting abolitionism, religious toleration, and “revolution principles,” she remained reticent on the subject of women’s rights and disliked being lumped with Catharine Macaulay, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Hays, and the other “viragos” of her age. As Barbauld instructed women in one of her early poems, “Your best, your sweetest empire, is—to PLEASE,” a theme elaborated on in her “The Rights of Woman” (1790). Such demurrals may have won this celebrated author a wider audience in Georgian Britain, but they have curried less favor with contemporary audiences. “Why,” queries Barbara Taylor in *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge, 2003), “did such a vigorous radicalism falter when it came to her own sex?” (184).

Yet this woman of many hats harbored more complex sentiments regarding female emancipation than her comments—or those of subsequent interpreters—would suggest. Indeed, it is one of the great pleasures of William McCarthy’s erudite and extensive biography to rescue Barbauld from the condescension, or perhaps in this case, confusion, of posterity. As McCarthy painstakingly demonstrates, in a work as much committed to probing Barbauld’s posthumous reception as to documenting her life, Barbauld’s “antifeminist” image was cultivated less by the author herself than by her niece Lucy Aikin, who was eager to bring her aunt’s sometimes extremist views more in line with Victorian tastes. In her “Memoir” of Barbauld, published in 1825, Aikin gave a “conservative spin to [her aunt’s] views on women,” most notably by including a letter, taken out of context, in which Barbauld seemed to reject an invitation to head an academy for young women (xvi). As McCarthy shows, however, the letter is misleading. Intended as a private correspondence with her husband, Barbauld was not opposed to female education, per se, but rather “recoil[ed] from the idea of having to form genteel young ladies because she [felt] that she [was] not one and fear[ed] being ridiculed for pretending” (142).

To focus on McCarthy’s excavation of Barbauld’s feminist worldviews, though, is not to suggest this as the sole or even primary emphasis of his weighty tome, the product of roughly twenty years worth of research on this subject. McCarthy’s “principal aim,” rather, is to provide a comprehensive accounting of Barbauld’s life and work, a goal that McCarthy sees as imperative given both the vagaries of historical memory and the limitations imposed by Barbauld’s own fragmented archive (xviii). This commitment to comprehensiveness leads