



Chaucer's Queer Nation (Medieval Cultures)

Glenn Burger

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Bringing the concerns of queer theory and postcolonial studies to bear on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, this ambitious book compels a rethinking not only of this most canonical of works, but also of questions of sexuality and gender in pre- and postmodern contexts, of issues of modernity and nation in historiography, and even of the enterprise of historiography itself. Glenn Burger shows us Chaucer uneasily situated between the medieval and the modern, his work representing new forms of sexual and communal identity but also enacting the anxieties provoked by such departures from the past.

Burger argues that, under the pressure of producing a poetic vision for a new vernacular English audience in the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer reimagines late medieval relations between the body and the community. In close readings that are at once original, provocative, and convincing, Chaucer's Queer Nation helps readers to see the author and audience constructed with and by the Tales as subjects-in-process caught up in a conflicted moment of "becoming." In turn, this historicization unsettles present-day assumptions about identity with the realization that social organizations of the body can be done differently.

Glenn Burger is associate professor of English at Queens College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

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