



# **Divine Ventriloquism in Medieval English Literature: Power, Anxiety, Subversion (The New Middle Ages)**

*M. Hayes*

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*Divine Ventriloquism in Medieval English Literature* studies medieval attitudes towards the human mediation of God's and Christ's voices and thus attends to how medieval people resignified a pagan practice. As Mary Hayes demonstrates, the ventriloquized divine voice ultimately permits an exploration of human relationships with God as well as mundane relationships between the divine voice's designated clerical mediators and their lay audiences. This book shows that the ventriloquized divine voice became a contested site of power as priests acquired more institutional endorsement and, ironically, devotion in some ways became putatively more lay-centered. Taken together, these chapters tell a story, one of a progression from an orthodox view of divine vocal power, to an anxiety over the authority of the priest's voice, to a subversive take on the ability of lay people not only to mimic the clerical voice but also to generate their own unique performances capable of divine communication.

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