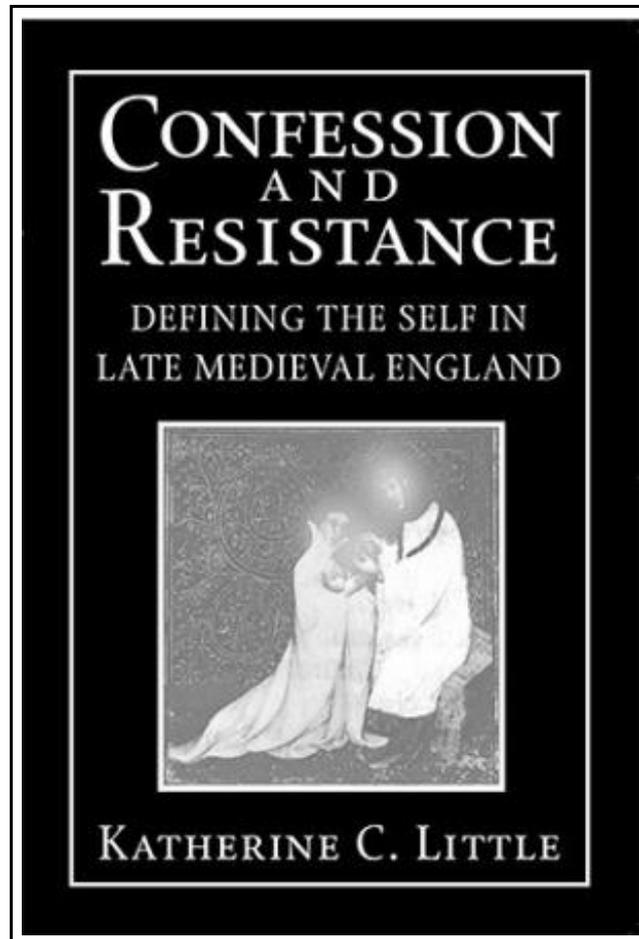


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CONFESSION AND RESISTANCE: DEFINING THE SELF IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND



University of Notre Dame Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England, N. Katherine Hayles, Katherine C. Little, For scholars of medieval literature, confession, with its language of sin and contrition, has often provided the basis for our understanding of medieval selfhood and subjectivity. Confessional texts, whether penitential manuals or literary depictions of confession, suggest ways that people spoke about themselves and how they understood their interiority. In "Confession and Resistance", Katherine C. Little cautions that medieval selfhood should not be understood merely in terms of confessional practice. She points to the controversy over confession and, more generally, lay instruction that was generated in late medieval England around the heresy known as Wycliffism (or Lollardy). This controversy, she maintains, reveals the contested nature of the language of medieval selfhood. Through her readings of Wycliffite sermons and polemical writings, Little argues that the Lollard resistance to confession should be understood as a debate over self-formation. For the Wycliffites, traditional confessional language had failed in its expected function - to define the self and to reveal the interior - and had to be replaced with new terms and new stories taken from the Bible. This new view of Wycliffism, as a crisis in the language of selfhood, allows the author to reevaluate the impact of Wycliffite ideas in Chaucer's "Parson's Tale", Gower's "Confessio Amantis", and Hoccleve's "Regiment of Princes". Little finds in these texts, all of which include confession as a theme, a similar concern with the inadequacy of the traditional confessional mode.



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