

the servant to serve a dominating perspective; Du Bois's double consciousness critiques the costs of this synthesis. Ultimately, Julian demonstrates the kinds of generative and meditative universalism that can arise from refusing synthesis of contradictions. By contrast modern racism results from a delusive synthesis with political consequences.

In chapter 6, Whitaker shifts from rhetorical contrariety and contradiction to the pinnacle of ancient and medieval persuasion, the enthymeme. After describing Aristotelian and medieval theories of the enthymeme, he goes hunting for how enthymemes do double work in the *Book of John Mandeville*. He argues, on the one hand, that enthymemes can work racially to cast other races as subrational according to certain unspoken Eurocentric norms, which lays groundwork for subsequent colonialisms. On the other hand, Whitaker draws on the work of Shirin Khanmohamadi to show how enthymemes can work dialogically to foreground cultural interpretation as open-ended.

In a cogent conclusion, Whitaker draws together the threads of the book as he critiques white innocence as a form of unseeing in early modern texts by slavers describing the onset of the European slave trade. Whitaker ultimately leverages medieval race thinking to undo the delusively factual mirage of modern racism, in a way that both charts a genealogy and opens a new resource for acknowledging the metaphoricality of race in the present.

Black Metaphors will be of interest to literary and cultural studies scholars and those interested in the longer durées of both race and rhetoric. Whitaker is a powerful and often surprising reader of texts, using moments of ambivalence to unlock a usefully unfamiliar and unparadigmatic Middle Ages.

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CHRISTIANA WHITEHEAD. *The Afterlife of St Cuthbert: Place, Texts and Ascetic Tradition*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 350. \$99.99 (paper). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.85

The Afterlife of St Cuthbert: Place, Texts and Ascetic Tradition, Christiania Whitehead's rich and engaging study of the textual tradition associated with Saint Cuthbert, moves chronologically, in an introduction and seven chapters, from texts associated with Cuthbert's early cult to fifteenth-century Middle English treatments of his life. Whitehead reads the literature associated with Cuthbert's cult alongside contemporary local, regional, and national politics. Whitehead covers a large amount of material, which she effectively marshals by focusing attention on a cluster of key themes, such as place and asceticism, which move in and out of focus in the numerous texts under discussion. Whitehead deftly examines multiple refashionings of Cuthbert in response to contemporary preoccupations in both Latin and the vernacular, finding commonalities and connections. Whitehead discerns a materialist aim in the textual tradition associated with Saint Cuthbert, focused on the control of space, while simultaneously resisting the construction of a grand narrative of the tradition. Whitehead does not analyze every treatment of Cuthbert's life, nor every facet of each text, and this selective approach allows for nuanced close readings together with nimble analysis of trends over time. Whitehead is persuasive yet also raises new questions and leaves space for the readers to think for themselves: the result is a compelling study that will stimulate further work.

Whitehead handles canonical texts incisively but relatively succinctly, with the greatest space given to the less familiar materials analyzed in later chapters. In the first chapter, Whitehead positions eighth-century works about Cuthbert in dialogue with contemporary Wilfridian

controversies, and she examines their representation of asceticism. In chapter 2, Whitehead analyzes the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* to show Cuthbert's community exploiting the power vacuum created by the loss of the Northumbrian royal house, and fashioning Cuthbert as a vigorous and implacable defender of land and borders. Chapter 3 deals with texts produced in the decades following the Norman conquest: Symeon's *Libellus de exordio*, the Old English poem *Durham*, and the *Capitula de miraculis et translationibus sancti Cuthberti*. Whitehead argues that Cuthbert's community used representations of their saint to manage conflicting histories and elites, critique contemporary mores, and protect their monastic character; the texts respond, at times rather less than obliquely, to local and regional disagreements, and endorse Anglo-Norman Durham as inheritor of Cuthbert's spiritual legacy. Whitehead highlights Symeon's linking of Bede and Cuthbert, so the hagiographer and saint benefit from mutual association, and she draws attention to the depiction of Cuthbert as energetic enforcer of boundaries. In the next chapter, dealing with *De mirabilibus* and Reginald of Durham's *Libellus de admirandis*, Whitehead discusses the reemergence of asceticism and nature miracles as important parts of the tradition in the late twelfth century. In Whitehead's analysis, Reginald emerges as a shrewd writer, carefully shaping the miracles in his collection to serve his community. New saints' cults are additional threats to be adroitly managed by Reginald, who marks areas of regional saintly influence by ensuring that Thomas of Canterbury and the much more local Godric of Finchale endorse Durham as a pilgrimage center. From Whitehead's productive attention to both literary style and historical context, the authors of these texts are revealed as pragmatic and practical, engaged with worldly events even as they produce works asserting the greater power of the spiritual.

Asceticism remains in the foreground in chapter 5, wherein Whitehead examines the somewhat fraught textual attempts to enfold the hermit Godric of Finchale into the service of the Benedictine community, alongside Bartholomew of Farne, a more model Cuthbertine figure. Whitehead shows Durham's Benedictine community actively constructing their own version of asceticism built around Cuthbert, with an emphasis on moderation and community. The chapter ends with analysis of the so-called Irish life of Cuthbert, which radically rewrites Cuthbert's origins, and was produced, Whitehead argues, for a Cistercian audience in southern Scotland before being taken up by the Durham community. Whitehead persuasively reads the Bedfordshire hermitage episode as an interpolation, due to its tellingly Benedictine interest in boundaries. Next, in a chapter that will be important reading for those interested in English mysticism, Whitehead examines two contemplative texts that originate in a Cuthbertine milieu: the thirteenth-century *Exortacio ad contemplacionem* and the fourteenth-century *Meditaciones* of the Monk of Farne. Whitehead suggests the *Meditaciones* respond to the altars in the chapel on Farne and emphasizes the importance of that contemplative space to their composition, but also shows how the Monk's theology resists regional anchoring. Whitehead draws attention to the dynamic and dramatic structure of the *Meditaciones*, and the sense of community they convey despite the intense interiority. Yet, the Monk's deeply affective contemplation, shaped by Anselm and Bernard of Clairvaux, emerges in tension with Durham's rather more practical Benedictine tradition, within which Cuthbert, the subject of the incomplete final meditation, remains rooted.

In chapter 7, both Cuthbert and the specific places and spaces associated with him return to prominence. Alongside examination of epitomes of Cuthbert's life, Whitehead identifies a standard sequence for presenting Cuthbert's narrative in the Durham community in the later medieval period, beginning with material from the Irish life, before moving through Bede's Prose *Vita* to miracles and community history; this arrangement is seen in the Middle English *Metrical Life*, the principal focus of this chapter. Whitehead's analysis of the *Metrical Life* offers intriguing insights into the reception of Bede, relations with Scotland and lay elites, and how the conflicting elements of Cuthbert's syncretic tradition were discussed within his own community in the fifteenth century. Whitehead's work will do much to draw scholarly attention to a text that emerges here as unjustly overlooked.

Whitehead's detailed and insightful monograph encourages the reader to think anew about familiar materials, and she brings neglected works to scholarly attention. Whitehead's approach demonstrates the value of combining literary analysis with attention to historical circumstance to examine the ever-shifting traditions surrounding saints. *The Afterlife of St Cuthbert* will be of interest to those who work on texts, places, and traditions associated with Cuthbert, and the reception of both pre- and post-Conquest saints more generally.

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JASON WHITTAKER. *Divine Images: The Life and Work of William Blake*. London: Reaktion Books, 2021. Pp. 392. \$50.00 (cloth).
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Jason Whittaker's new book, *Divine Images: The Life and Work of William Blake*, is a solid overview of Blake's life and works. Its real merits are Whittaker's utilization of the most recent discoveries and scholarship regarding Blake and his ability to synthesize complex information about Blake's methods of artistic production, his ever-evolving myth and symbolism, and the tumultuous historical and religious times in which he lived. In producing a popular biography, Whittaker does not aspire to break any new ground but seeks, instead, to synthesize what is known about Blake and his works. This modest focus, however, allows Whittaker, at times, to supplant dated sections of G. E. Bentley Jr.'s standard biography, *The Stranger from Paradise* (2001), in terms of reliability.

This accomplishment is especially true in the first chapter, where Whittaker synthesizes the discoveries regarding Blake's mother and her relationship to the Moravian Church, and Whittaker avoids the clichéd association between Blake and religious Dissent. That said, Whittaker moves rather quickly through the first thirty-plus years of Blake's life, beginning with his parents and ending with the creation of illuminated printing and the other works of the late 1780s. Picking up with the *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *The Book of Thel* (1789), the pace of the second and subsequent chapters slows, and although Whittaker offers important details about Blake's life and context, the works themselves are at the forefront of his account.

Whittaker's readings of the *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and the *Songs of Experience* (1794) appear in different chapters, and, implicitly, he follows the idea that the two sets of poems reflect a change not only in society, which was transformed by the French Revolution and the war between France and Britain, but also within Blake himself. Whittaker highlights many of the backward-facing gestures of *Innocence*, such as the use of Elizabethan metrical forms, the motifs of eighteenth-century children's verse, and the echoes of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. Importantly, he also emphasizes that innocence was essential to Blake's political thought and insightfully comments that this elevation of innocence is what allowed Blake to escape the cynicism and despair that made his fellow Romantics reject political radicalism (72). Coming after his analysis of *America* (1793) and *Europe* (1794), Whittaker's reading of *Experience* is positioned within the political context of reactionary Britain, and he stresses that Blake's responses to these events were at once political, aesthetic, and spiritual.

In his treatment of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *America a Prophecy* (1793), and the engravings to John Stedman's *Narrative, of a Five Years' Expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (1793), Whittaker brings a welcomed, contemporary sensibility to issues of race, gender, and sexuality to Blake's depictions of rape and slavery. He highlights Blake's ability to expose the cultural forces that at once constitute identity and form the basis of