



Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Poetry: Studies in Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan (Studies in Renaissance Literature)

R.V. Young

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This book offers a comprehensive account of the literary and theological background to English devotional poetry of the seventeenth century, concentrating on four major poets, Donne, Herbert, Vaughan and Crashaw. It challenges both Protestant poetics and postmodernism, the prevailing critical approaches to Renaissance literature: by reading the poetry in the light of continental Catholic devotional literature and theology, the author demonstrates that religious poetry in seventeenth-century England was not rigidly or exclusively Protestant in its doctrinal and liturgical orientation. He argues that poetic genres and devices that have been ascribed to strict Reformation influence are equally prominent in the Catholic poetry of Spain and France; he also shows that postmodernist anxiety about subjective identity and the capacity of language for signification is in fact a concern of such landmark Christian thinkers as Augustine and Aquinas, and appears in devotional poetry in the Christian tradition. Professor R.V. YOUNG teaches at North Carolina State University.

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