

ILLITERATE MEMORY AND
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE: MARGERY
KEMPE, THE LITURGY, AND THE
“WOMAN IN THE CROWD”

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Margery Kempe's use of Luke 11's boisterously outspoken "woman in the crowd" to defend public religious speech may reveal her aural organization of spiritual memory. Frequent rehearsal may have reorganized her textual and visionary memories by links with specific liturgical performances.

When Archbishop Bowet's monks interrogated Margery Kempe in 1417, her *Book* tells us she placed her public religious testimony under the pope's control and compared herself with Luke's *mulier de turba*, the "woman in the crowd" with a boisterous voice.¹ This passage has been examined frequently for evidence of medieval constructions of gender and the Church's enforcement of orthodoxy against the threat of Lollardy.² As one of Margery's longest examples of her debating style, it may help us understand the tension between a literate elite and the illiterate English populace shortly before the introduction of mass-produced printed books and vastly increased vernacular literacy. Margery's specific use of that Lukan passage also could help us understand how her spiritual consciousness affected the mnemonic process by which she retrieved the passage, whether to resist accusers or to construct the *Book*.

Because Margery's *Book* describes memories saturated by intense spiritual emotions, readers might suspect that such mental tumult in an illiterate mind chaotically disorganized her narrative. Indeed, the *Book* tells us that she often could not verbally describe her spiritual experiences, and unless

confession allowed her to rehearse them in speech, “in a schort tyme aftyr sche had forȝetyn þe most party þerof & ny euerydeel” (p. 202). Margery’s sudden use of a particularly appropriate biblical passage in debate, however, suggests another possibility, namely, that her affective spirituality structured a memory that was especially useful to her. The same powers of recall that enabled her public defense before the archbishop also could have enabled reconstruction of the episode for the *Book*. Her spiritual experiences required her to defend oral, female authority against the literate males who policed public speech, including the *Book*’s scribes. According to Margery’s admittedly self-interested version of events, she had a surprising advantage in public debate, one she displayed to good effect when describing her appropriation of the voice of Luke’s “woman in the crowd.”

Given the Lollards’ fame for translating the Bible and citing it in their defense, Margery’s decision to quote Scripture in Middle English was not an obvious disproof of Lollardy.³ Unless she secretly was Latin-literate, she must have learned the text from someone who explicated it for her in Middle English as a praise of female speech and Mary’s role in the Incarnation. If she were powerfully impressed by a biblical passage, she might have been more likely to repeat it in the language in which she learned its significance rather than repeat the Vulgate.

Of all recent scholars, Josephine Tavers published the strongest stand for Kempe’s literacy, suggesting that the literacy claim was invented to enhance Margery’s rhetorical position and that she even chose Latin texts read to her during her most formal instruction.⁴ This is a bold interpretation of the statement that “sche herd redyn” those books (p. 39). We do know she had “hir boke in hir hand” when injured by a chapel ceiling collapse, though illiterate book ownership is by no means impossible, especially in the case of breviaries and books of hours (p. 21).⁵ The *Book*’s assertion, “þan wrot sche lettys to” her son in Germany, perhaps in 1431, may indicate she became minimally literate in the vernacular *ars dictaminis* sometime before composition of “*Secundus liber*” around 1437–38, near the end of her life (p. 224). In two other instances, however, the *Book* tells us that she asked others to write letters for her as late as 1417, when she was about forty-four (pp. 45, 111). The *Book* also records a careful distinction between what Margery “did wryte” (dictated or caused to be written) as opposed to what the scribe says he “wrot” (pp. 3, 4), a difference that Diane Uhlman suggests can indicate both that “Kempe could not write. . .but at other times, she is the ‘writer,’ and the scribes are figured as her instruments.”⁶ As late as 1436, according to the scribe’s introduction to “*Liber 1*,” Margery could not detect without help that the *Book*’s manuscript was illegibly written, but “browt [the second scribe] þe boke to redyn” (p. 4). The scribe’s preface declares what “I purpose to wrytyn” (p. 14) and

describes his reading to Margery what the first scribe had written, “sche sum-tym helpyng where ony difficulte was,” but the *Book* never says she read what she dictated to the scribes (pp. 5, 4). Tarvers reminds us that most medieval Christians knew Latin words and phrases such as Genesis’ “*Crescite & multiplicamini*” (1.22), and one might add the *Book*’s assertion that Margery recited Psalm 126 “of þe Sawter” and the twenty-eight-line hymn “*Veni Creator Spiritus*” (pp. 235, 248). Though the *Book* records Margery quoting Latin from memory in appropriate contexts, she almost never parses it to interpret as she does when debating in Middle English, except once when answering the specific demand to interpret Genesis 1.22. Because the *Book* offers no conclusive evidence of Margery’s English or Latin literacy, the case must remain “not proven,” though the possibilities are tantalizing.

Considering Margery’s extensive contact with literate people, it is not hard to imagine her becoming partially literate at some point in her life. Even if she remained illiterate, her reverent attitude toward Scripture might have made her an illiterate bookowner who could not identify even her own name on a page in a dream.⁷ She might have learned to read vernacular texts, but not to write them. She may have learned to read and even to write late in life, but perhaps only enough to correspond with her son (p. 224).⁸ She might even have learned enough reading and writing skills to have written the book, but she preferred, as the literate Margaret Paston often did, to dictate rather than perform the scribe’s task. Before accepting too quickly the need for a literate Margery to produce the *Book*, we should consider the last decade’s research into the differences between literate and illiterate minds by literary historians, anthropologists, cognitive psychologists, and physiologists. Their results suggest her claims of illiteracy could be true, and her narrative may offer an extraordinary opportunity to understand how an illiterate mind could command complex memorized knowledge without having used books to extract it or writing to organize it.

Early literacy theorists assumed literacy utterly transformed the mind, enabling literates to think abstractly with more precision and to use rhetorically complex, hypotactic grammatical constructions instead of illiterate parataxis.⁹ Literacy also was thought to enable literate communities to triumph over their illiterate neighbors. Recent research in medieval literacy and modern anthropology has challenged these assumptions, especially the consequences they predict about how we live with, and without, the technologies of reading and writing.¹⁰ Many people may have been partially literate during the late medieval period, and even illiterates can participate in the *mentalité* of reading and writing neighbors by listening to them reading aloud.

Comparison of rhetorical and neurological research with the *Book*’s text suggests Margery may well have been illiterate while the *Book* was composed.

For instance, the scribe's "Proem" and first-person comments contain hypotactically subordinated clause and phrase structures, repetition with balance and parallel structure, and are embellished by rhetorical tropes such as metaphor (pp. 1–5). Margery's narratives are paratactic, rhetorically unadorned, and modified only by some colloquial similes such as "fear strong as fear of death," or "brilliance like the sun."¹¹ Her imprecise number use also resembles behaviors of modern illiterates.¹² Except in the scribe's first-person passages, the *Book* never assigns years to the thirty named liturgical or seasonal days on which events occur.¹³ The scribe's time references name the liturgical day and calendar year (pp. 5, 221). Margery rarely counts specific numbers of things, events, or persons, using "or more" and phrases such as "vij yer er viij yer" to give the appearance of precision without specifically committing to a number, as in the period during which a priest read to her (p. 143). She specifies she had not tasted meat or wine "iij zere er sche went owt of Ynglond," perhaps because of her vivid experience of fasting while others ate and drank (p. 61). Margery sometimes remembers precise quantities of money, but that is a necessary skill for anyone attempting to run a brewery or mill (for example, the bishop of Lincoln's "xxcj schelynggs & viij d" [p. 35]).

What an illiterate Margery did with knowledge she aurally acquired need not be arbitrarily limited. Illiterate modern Micronesian navigators, using only simple wooden instruments, routinely master detailed route knowledge to sail hundreds of miles on the open Pacific, and they can transmit that knowledge to others.¹⁴ Their mnemonic ceremonies rehearsing knowledge of stars, islands, and currents resemble medieval liturgical and civic rituals that mapped sacred narratives upon local time and geography. In addition, a woman like Margery, who went to Mass and confession two or three times a day (p. 12) and actively participated in religious processions and other observances, could have developed a mnemonic "para-liturgical" social performance in her famous bouts of crying and exclamation.¹⁵ Literate subjects can name two-dimensional images more fluently, but literates and illiterates do not differ in fluency when naming three-dimensional objects.¹⁶ Spoken verbal fluency is unchanged by literacy as long as words tested are from contexts familiar to the subjects.¹⁷ Perhaps illiterate minds remember dramatically, in three dimensions like movies of the 1950s—a possibility that may relate to Margery's narration of her memories. Several scholars have shown that Margery's visions fuse biblical passages she had heard with memories of York mystery plays and with elements of Easter and Candlemass religious rituals.¹⁸ Margery would not have needed literacy to debate the bishop's monks or to compose the *Book*.

Margery's mixture of illiterate narrative traits with the capacity to quote extensive and appropriate passages from texts is consistent with her having

been “aurally” or “lay” literate.¹⁹ The *Book* records her frequent aural instruction in textual evidence and reasoning in dialogue with literate clerks and in sermons at Mass. This suggests her memory for textual evidence might have been conditioned by association with aural instruction and with elements of the Mass that provoked affective responses. The *Book’s* report of her use of Luke 11 in the confrontation with Bowet supports this hypothesis.

When Margery repeats “the woman in the crowd” th’s praise of Mary’s “wombe þat þe bar & þe tetys þat ʒaf þe sowkyn,” she apparently believes the passage unquestionably warrants the woman’s outspoken authority. Her translation of Jesus’s response also appears to do so: “Forsøþe so ar þe blissed þat heryn þe word of God and kepyn it.” The archbishop’s “gret clerke” does not debate Margery’s translation, but dashes off to bring “a boke & leyd Saynt Powyl for hys party a-geyns hir þat no woman xulde prechyn” (p. 126). This allows Margery to change the subject from whether she should speak in public, to what kind of public speech she is allowed, and by the end of the anecdote she preaches a sermon at the archbishop’s request. Yet the passage from Luke was by no means a straightforward defense of women’s public speech, and the *Book’s* report of its use seems increasingly bold the deeper we delve into it.

The passage’s ambiguity starts with Luke’s Greek, which some scholars understand as colloquially blessing Jesus rather than praising Mary: “Gee, I wish I had a son like that.”²⁰ If the woman and Luke intended praise of Mary, Jesus’s reply remains ambiguous because of the transitional particle, *menounge*, leading to praise of those who hear and keep the word of the Father. Depending on context, *menounge* can mean either “yea, doubtless” or “nay, but rather.”²¹ Jesus’s reply could affirm the praise of Mary and, with it, the woman’s right to speak, or it could contradict her outspokenness and praise the Father instead of the Mother.

The Vulgate translation of *menounge* as “quippi-ni” usually means “Why not?,” “certainly,” “to be sure,” “indeed,” or “of course.”²² However, some versions of the Vulgate translate *menounge* as “quinimmo,” an unambiguous “no, rather,” and in early modern English translations, such as the Douay-Rheims Bible, Jesus’s reply begins with “But rather,” not “Forsøþe.” Even sympathetic Kempe scholars accept the contradictory translation, interpreting Margery’s version as “somewhat forced and self-serving” or a “presumption of authority,” though they also admit its effectiveness.²³ Margery seems to have taken a needless risk by translating rather than repeating the Latin.²⁴ Six times the *Book* tells us she remembered and recited Latin that could be heard in the Mass or under her lectors’ tutelage (pp. 78, 88, 121, 196, 235, 248).²⁵

Why should Margery’s arguably faulty translation of a controversial Vulgate text persuade her audience? And how did it come to Margery’s

mind, whether while debating the clerks or composing the *Book*?²⁶ Perhaps Margery succeeded because she did not use the speech in Luke's narrative context, hailing Jesus as a teacher and exorcist. Rather, she echoed the praise of Mary as a dutiful woman, as the passage is sung daily in the Mass for the Little Office of Our Lady.²⁷ Immediately after Luke 11.27–28, worshipers hear the "Ave Maria," which praises rather than dismisses Mary. Margery's aural experience of this passage, explicated and translated for her by her clerical confidants, could have motivated her to remember it in defense of women's evangelical speech when under public scrutiny. Moreover, the clergymen also would have heard the passage in the Mass, making them more likely to accept Margery's translation.²⁸

Margery's assumption of the "woman in the crowd" persona also may show us how she locates herself in memory, not in a linear textual order, but in a cyclical order of liturgical performances and other intense spiritual experiences.²⁹ The scribes and Margery tell us four times that the *Book* is not in chronological order, but they blame this on her advanced age when she began to dictate it (pp. 5, 6, 165, 221). Nevertheless, she recalls itineraries, dialogues, and biblical evidence from decades-old disputations, in a manner consistent with the use of an artificial memory system anchored by the liturgy's annual celebrations. In addition to the *Book*'s linkage of events by similar spiritual affect, liturgical events are also common transition devices. While retrieving information from such mental places, Margery could rapidly associate affectively related memories. We see this when she assembles serial visions of souls in purgatory or juxtaposes two episodes of questionable clerical behavior, and the *Book* warns, "It is in felynge leche to þe materys þat ben wretyn be-for, notwythstondyng it befel long aftyr þe materys whеч folwyn" (pp. 53–54, 58). In Margery's response to Bowet's monks, she connects four arguments associated with permission to speak: the Bible's command to testify, the pope's authority to command in the name of biblical authority, Jesus's confirmation of the woman's public praise of Mary, and her own recall of the Pauline prohibition against female preaching. Her recall might be quicker than the monks' access to reading memories because she remembers repeated emotionally stimulating events. Luke 11.27–28 is read on the third Sunday in Lent, the most important of "scrutiny" Sundays, when catechumens are examined before Easter Sunday baptism.³⁰ Historian Martin R. Dudley notes that evening Masses before Pentecost and Easter were considered most propitious for baptism and for purification of women after childbirth because of their proximity to the great feasts.³¹ Margery's fourteen "churchings" would have insured that she frequently witnessed these rites, linking the passage with interrogations such as those that she was undergoing (p. 125).

Catechism and the Mass are, of course, only part of Margery's preparation for a lifetime of scrutiny. Conversations with sympathetic clergy and lay-literates such as Julian of Norwich would have taught her new passages from Scripture and new ways to interpret them. Even when she summarizes texts she "herd redyn," the *Book* says, she does not value those readings as much as "heryng of holy sermownys. . .[and] holy thowtys, holy spechys, and the hy reuelacyons wech owr Lord schewyd vn-to hir, bothyn of hir-selſe & of other men and women" (pp. 39, 143–44).

Margery's narrative sometimes represents books ambiguously with respect to truth. Oaths, such as the one Bowet ordered, do not even involve reading the book; only the oath-taker's willingness to touch it while speaking is required, and Margery knows from experience that ceremonial books do not punish oath breakers (p. 67). If one has never known a text other than by hearing, speaking, and remembering it, it lives in one's consciousness, and the physical book might not seem relevant to knowing it. Margery's dream memory contains the most poignant of her encounters with books, the only occasion upon which she reports seeing the written word. In her dream of "an howge boke" held by the angel, she tells us she can see "in the boke the Trinite & al in gold" (p. 206). Though she can see the illumination, she must ask the angel, "Wher is my name," and he must tell her, "Her is thi name at the Trinyte fot wretyn" (p. 207). She seems to experience the text of her name as an icon intelligible only in the angel's speech, rather than as language she can parse and interpret.

Margery's belief in the virtue of her unlettered status seems strongest in her debates with literate men. She says that when the bishop of Lincoln's clerks heard her ready answers, they "had ful gret meruayl of hir that sche answeryd so redyly & pregnawntly" (p. 35). She quotes wondering London lawyers who say: "We han gon to scole many ȝerys, and ȝet arn we not sufficient to answeryn as thu dost. Of whom hast thu this cunningg" (p. 135). Her answer, "Of the Holy Gost," leads to a second translation from Luke (12.11–12): "ȝa serys. . .ther may no man sey a good worde wyth-owtyn the ȝyft of the Holy Gost, for owr lord Ihesu Crist seyde to hys disciplys, 'Stody not what ȝe schal sey, for it schal not be ȝowr spiryt that schal spekyn in ȝow, but it schal be the spiryt of the Holy Gost' " (p. 135).³² This is not the perennial students' myth of "getting straight As without studying." The *Book* tells us how hard Margery worked to remember.

Margery rehearsed her mental library, especially Easter-week visions from John 18 and Luke 22 (pp. 184–91), often offending her neighbors in doing so. In Jerusalem, when forced to swear not to interrupt meals with exclamations, she said "I must nedys speke of my Lord Ihesu Crist þow al þis world had forbydyn it me" (p. 66). This describes mnemonic review, binding aural textual memory with affective spiritual experience in which

she participated as spectator or actor. Margery's most challenging mnemonic practice occurs in the longest passage attributed to her in the first person, the "prayers of the creature," beginning with "'Veni Creator Spiritus' wyth alle þe versys longyn þerto" (p. 248). This twenty-eight-line poem was associated with Terce on Whitsunday, the Feast of Pentecost, invoking the apostles' divinely inspired speech "at the third hour of the day" (Acts 2.15).³³ Margery's practice of the "Veni" also may respond to mockery of the apostles' speech by those who, like her detractors, thought outspoken spiritual expression was drunken or deranged. She prays God will "illumynyn hir sowle, as he dede hys apostelys on Pentecost Day, & induyn hir wyth þe 3yftys of þe holy Gost," asking for the gift of tongues, not literacy, which she does not appear to need.

Margery's proclamation of her "felyngs" against the disembodied voice of the book often strikes literate hearers as uncanny. Six times the *Book* says interrogators suspect she is possessed (pp. 28, 85, 113, 126, 150, 165). When a clerk must produce a book to cite Paul's epistle, and is answered instantly by an illiterate who needs no book to do so, it is easy to understand why he might believe she has a demon inside her. Margery seems to possess, and to be possessed by, a mnemonic system so unlike literate minds in its access to memories of emotionally vivid language that it is "as an hyd God in [her] sowle" (p. 205).

Notes

1. *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech and Hope Emily Allen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 126. Hereafter, references to the *Book* are cited parenthetically. I preserve Lynn Staley's distinction between "Margery," a narrative persona, and Kempe, a historical source of the events the *Book* describes; see Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Because "fiction" seems an anachronistic concept for Kempe's era, I treat all events described in the *Book* not as fiction but rather as artifacts collaboratively constructed by Kempe and the scribes, artifacts that retain detectable evidence of their different narrative styles. See Kimberley M. Benedict's *Empowering Collaborations: Writing Partnerships between Religious Women and Scribes in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2004), especially chap. 1 ("Precedents"), pp. 1–22, and for her critique of previous formalist attempts to distinguish between Margery's contributions and those of the scribes, see pp. 88–91. My analysis, though based in stylistic analysis of form, does not presume either Margery or the scribes were inherently more powerful in the collaboration that produced the *Book*. The following passages of the Bible, which are referred to in the text, are found in Luke. The Latin is from the Vulgate and the English is from the Douay-Rheims Version. 11.27: "Factum

est autem cum haec diceret extollens vocem quaedam mulier de turba dixit illi beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisti." 11.28: "At ille dixit quippini beati qui audiunt verbum Dei et custodiunt." 11.27: "And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to him: 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck.'" 11.28: "But he said: 'Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.'" "

2. Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambeldon Press, 1984), p. 130; Lynn Staley, *Dissenting Fictions*, pp. 119–21; Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 109–113.
3. Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 130–33; Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), chap. 9; Staley, *Dissenting Fictions*, p. 147. Jennifer Summit points out the generalized male suspicion of female mystics' public speech and writing in "Women and Authorship," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 97–99 [91–108].
4. Josephine Tavers, "The Alleged Illiteracy of Margery Kempe: A Reconsideration of the Evidence," *Medieval Perspectives* 11 (1996): 117 [113–24].
5. Carol Meale, ". . . alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich, and frensch": Laywomen and Their Books in Late Medieval England," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp. 133–34 [128–55]. In that same collection, Felicity Riddy points out that only one woman of this era is known to have translated Latin text to English ("Women Talking about the Things of God," p. 111 [104–27]).
6. Diane Uhlman, "The Comfort of Voice, the Solace of Script: Orality and Literacy in *The Book of Margery Kempe*," *Studies in Philology* 91.1 (Winter 1994): 55 [50–69].
7. Carolyn Dinshaw, "Margery Kempe," in *Medieval Women's Writing*, p. 227 [222–39].
8. In "Alleged Illiteracy," Josephine Tavers accepts this letter as prima facie evidence of vernacular written literacy. Jennifer Summit's discussion of medieval women and authorship implicitly raises this possibility in "Women and Authorship," in *Medieval Women's Writing*, pp. 91–108.
9. Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Eric Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), and "The Oral-Literate Equation: A Formula for the Modern Mind," in *Literacy and Orality*, ed. David R. Olson and Nancy Torrance (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 11–27. Patricia Bizzell critiques this work in "Arguing about Literacy," *College English* 50.2 (February 1988): 141–53. Also see Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 8–13.

10. Franz Bäuml, "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Speculum* 55.2 (April 1980): 237–65; and Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading*, pp. 76–108, esp. pp. 85–86. See also Ivan Ilich, "A Plea for Research on Lay Literacy," *Interchange* 18.1–2 (Spring–Summer 1987): 9–22; repr. in *Literacy and Orality*, ed. D.R. Olson and N. Torrance (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 28–46.
11. The obvious exception, which Allen's 1940 note calls "this tremendously long sentence," is the *Book's* concluding prayer (p. 252, and notes on pp. 349–50). Allen lists several sources Margery could have been imitating to assemble the twenty-eight lines of variations on the theme of multiplicity.
12. Illiterate minds appear not to remember numbers as literate minds do. Rather than conceiving of numbers as symbols, such as letters or words, illiterates remember the concept of number as quantity by assembling a suitable quantity of like objects in memories to stand for numbers. A. Castro-Caldas, A. Reis, and M. Guerreiro, "Neuropsychological Aspects of Illiteracy," *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation* 7.4 (1997): 336 [327–38].
13. Samuel Fanous counts fifty-five times when days of the year were named more specifically than "one day" or "some tyme."^[4] Measuring the Pilgrim's Progress: Internal Emphases in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 157–76.
14. Edwin Hutchins, "Understanding Micronesian Navigation," in *Mental Models*, ed. D. Gentner and A.L. Stevens (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1983), pp. 191–226.
15. C. Clifford Flanigan, Kathleen Ashley, and Pamela Sheingorn, "Liturgy as Social Performance," in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2001), pp. 695–714.
16. Karl Magnus Petersson, Alexandra Reis, and Martin Ingvar, "Cognitive Processing in Literate and Illiterate Subjects: A Review of Some Recent Behavioral and Functional Neuroimaging Data," *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 422 (2001): 251–67; and Castro-Caldas et al., "Neuropsychological Aspects of Illiteracy," 327–38. Literacy's changes in brain structure and mapping of mental functions appear independent of demographic factors including gender and ethnicity. Jennifer Manly et al., "Literacy and Cognitive Change among Ethnically Diverse Elders," *International Journal of Psychology* 39.1 (February 2004): 47–61.
17. See Petersson et al., "Cognitive Processing;" and F. Ostrosky-Solis, Miguel Arellano, and Martha Pérez, "Can Learning to Read and Write Change the Brain Organization?: An Electrophysical Study," *International Journal of Psychology* 39.1 (February 2004): 27–36.
18. *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Meech and Allen, p. 335n; Judith Rosenthal, "Margery Kempe, and Medieval Anti-Judaic Ideology," *Medieval Encounters* 5.3 (1999): 409–20; and Carol Meale, "'This is a deed bok, the tother a quick': Theatre and the Drama of Salvation in the *Book of Margery Kempe*," in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval*

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- Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Brown et al. (Turnhout, Belg.: Brepols, 2000), pp. 49–67.
19. Bäuml, “Varieties and Consequences,” 246; Illich, “Lay Literacy,” pp. 28–29 and 39–41. Fourteenth-century German vernacular literates were called *verstanden Layen* or *Kluge* (the clever). See D.H. Green, “Orality and Reading: The State of Research in Medieval Studies,” *Speculum* 65.2 (April 1990): 267–80, esp. 275–76.
 20. William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), pp. 141–42.
 21. James Strong, *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996). Risto Uro believes the best reading is “corrective,” a “yes, but rather [which softens] the contrast between maternal honor and true discipleship.” “Is Thomas an Encratite Gospel?” in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas: Studies of the New Testament and Its World*, ed. Risto Uro (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), p. 148 [140–62].
 22. Sir William Smith and Sir John Lockwood, *Chambers Murray Latin-English Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1933; London: John Murray, 1933; repr. Edinburgh: Larousse, 1976), p. 610.
 23. Lochrie, *Translations*, p. 110; and Staley, *Dissenting Fictions*, pp. 120–21.
 24. The *Book’s* first recorded English translation of the Vulgate (Mark 3.35) is attributed to none other than Jesus, in the context of one of Margery’s early visions (p. 31).
 25. D.M. Hope reminds us that, after the eleventh century, priests celebrated the Great Mass with their backs to worshipers, who “were reduced to the state of mere spectators,” in “The Medieval Western Rite,” in *The Study of Liturgy*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, S.J. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 238 [220–40]. Nevertheless, private masses in which the laity participated became very popular after the thirteenth century (Hope, “Medieval Western Rite,” p. 239). Margery is said to have heard numerous sermons and other forms of “preaching,” suggesting that the fifteenth-century English Mass remained audible to congregants. In addition to Genesis 1:22 and Psalm 117, she would have heard also the hymns “Salve Sanctu Parens” and “Veni Creator Spiritus,” Psalm 124, and line 26 of Psalm 117, repeated routinely in the Sanctus (Kempe, *The Book*. pp. 196, 248, 235, 88). Psalm 126 would have been heard during the Double Feast of the Seven Holy Founders of the Servites, celebrated on February 17 since 1304. “Salve Sanctu Parens” is sung in the Office of the Blessed Mary, and “Veni Creator Spiritus” was sung at Terce on Whitsunday for Pentecost. Margery also knows her “bone maryd ring” is engraved with the motto “Ihesu est amor meus,” which she reports hearing Jesus say in a vision and in Middle English translation (pp. 78, 161, 17).
 26. Mary Carruthers argues such “errors” are common medieval sense-for-sense translation practices. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 133–35.

27. Leslie A. St. L. Toke, "Little Office of Our Lady," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09294a.htm> (accessed January 14, 2005).
28. Margery's reading of Luke also is shared by other literate contemporaries. Lochrie analyzes William Brute's use of the entire passage to defend women's preaching and Christine de Pizan's use of the woman's speech alone to defend all women's public voices (*Translations*, pp. 110–112).
29. Dinshaw, "Margery Kempe," 226–29.
30. T.B. Scannell, "Catechumen," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03430b.htm> (accessed January 14, 2005).
31. Martin R. Dudley, "Sacramental Liturgies in the Middle Ages," in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2000), pp. 221–23 [214–43].
32. The following are additional Bible passages from Luke that are referred to in the text. The Latin is from the Vulgate and the English is from the Douay-Rheims Version. 12.11: "Cum autem inducent vos in synagogas et ad magistratus et potestates nolite solliciti esse qualiter aut quid respondeatis aut quid dicatis." 12.12: "Spiritus enim Sanctus docebit vos in ipsa hora quae oporteat dicere." 12.11: "And when they shall bring you into the synagogues and to magistrates and powers, be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say." 12.12: "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you must say."
33. H.T. Henry, "Veni Creator Spiritus," in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 15, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15341a.htm> (accessed February 6, 2005).