



Reading Piers Plowman and the Pilgrim's Progress: Reception and the Protestant Reader

Professor Barbara A Johnson PhD

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Centering her discussion on two historical "ways of reading"—which she calls the Protestant and the lettered—Barbara A. Johnson traces the development of a Protestant readership as it is reflected in the reception of Langland's *Piers Plowman* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Informed by reader-response and reception theory and literacy and cultural studies, Johnson's ambitious examination of these two ostensibly literary texts charts the cultural roles they played in the centuries following their composition, roles far more important than their modern critical reputations can explain.

Johnson argues that much more evidence exists about how earlier readers read than has hitherto been acknowledged. The reception of *Piers Plowman*, for example, can be inferred from references to the work, the apparatus its Renaissance printer inserted in his editions, the marginal comments readers inscribed both in printed editions and in manuscripts, and the apocryphal "plowman" texts that constitute interpretations of Langland's poem. She demonstrates by example that what is culturally transmitted has not been just the work itself; it includes vestiges of past readers' encounters with the text that are traceable both in the way a text is presented as well as in the way that presentation is received.

Conditioned more by religious, historical, and economic forces than by literary concerns, Langland's poem became a part of the reformist tradition that culminated in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. By understanding this tradition, Bunyan's place in it, and the way the reception of *The Pilgrim's Progress* illustrates the beginning of a new, more realistic fictional tradition, Johnson concludes, we can begin to delineate a more accurate history of the ways literature and society intersect, a history of readers reading.

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From reader reviews:

Kerry Diaz:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a publication. The book Reading Piers Plowman and the Pilgrim's Progress: Reception and the Protestant Reader it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book provides high quality.

Donna Clark:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Reading Piers Plowman and the Pilgrim's Progress: Reception and the Protestant Reader, you can enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Bonnie Abramowitz:

The book untitled Reading Piers Plowman and the Pilgrim's Progress: Reception and the Protestant Reader contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains the woman idea with easy way. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was compiled by famous author. The author will take you in the new age of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site in addition to order it. Have a nice go through.

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