

MENOGAL, MARÍA ROSA. *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric*. Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press, 1994. xv + 296 pp. £47.50 (hardback); £16.95 (paperback). A shock to critical reading and exegetical systems, this book is guaranteed to shake up accepted ideas and notions of Culture and Canon. Reappraisal of the vernacular, pluralistic, *muwashshaha*, an eleventh-century lyric form, through Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* to Eric Clapton's songs confronts masculinist humanism at all its regularising levels – philology, grammar, history, rhetoric – with narrative in the lyrical, but no less political, mode in tongues of ambiguity, exile, the hermetic and heretical. This book is arcane, heterodox eclectic, ecstatic, unconventional and protean. It does, however, match its subject with a matrix of scholarship of the first order in ways which will redeem Medieval studies from backlash to postmodernism and male interpretations of the period. This variegated book cannot but leave readers dissatisfied with current critical smoothness and unifying order.

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