

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue contains two sets of reflections. The first, “Queer Methodologies and/or Queers in Medieval Studies: Where Are We Now,” is a group of five pieces revised from a 2002 Leeds conference organized by Michael O’Rourke (University College Dublin). These pieces interrogate the relationship of queer theory to medieval scholarship and suggest exciting new avenues for research using the destabilizing tools of queer studies. These brief essays stand in interesting relation to the essays in our Fall 2002 issue (*MFF* 34) on “Are We Post-Feminist Yet?” How do we differentiate “queer studies” from “feminist analysis”? What is the status of “woman” as reality and “heuristic tool” in studies that reject all forms of essentialism? In exactly what way is “woman” still a category? These are interesting questions for SMFS members. All of us must be impressed by the wide range of books and articles in medieval feminist and medieval queer studies that have been published in the last several years: will we soon be asking whether we are “post-queer” yet?

The second group of essays remind us, alas, that all is not yet altogether fortunate for feminist scholars. These pieces are the fruit of an SMFS Roundtable on “Are you still deciding to be either a medievalist or a feminist?” which was held at the 2003 International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo. The contributors speak to the continuing difficulty (when not anguish) of contemporary women medievalists’ professional lives and choices — and of professional cultures — that still undermine our work as medievalists, women, and male and female feminist medievalists.

—Bonnie Wheeler

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

This “fall” issue of *MFF* is, once again, coming out in the dead of winter, and I only hope it will reach you before the first day of spring! The contributors and general editor were timely in their submissions, but the bottleneck is located firmly on my desk. My past eight years’ experience in assembling and producing *MFF* have not resulted in any greater punctuality, and for that I apologize.

To compensate, I offer you something to clip and paste inside your suitcase for when you pack for Kalamazoo this year. The 40 or so attendees at last year’s SMFS banquet compiled a list of all the small comforts and luxuries that we miss when we take up our ascetic quarters in the Valley dorms. Some of these are not practical to bring on planes, but for those of you who can drive to Kalamazoo, they may not be too impractical after all!

The banqueters recommended everyone remember to bring: hangers; an alarm clock; a fluffy towel and washcloth; rubber shower shoes; your own soap and hand lotion; comfortable walking shoes; a travel iron; lots of layers, for the inevitably varied and unpredictable temperatures; nametag “adaptors”, so you don’t have to perforate your favorite silk shirt; fruit and/or granola bars; a corkscrew and/or bottle-opener; lots of quarters, for phones and vending