

COMMENTARY: ON GRADUATE STUDENT ISSUES



The following brief essays form Part I of a two-part dialogue on issues of concern for graduate students and faculty about how we are training, placing, encouraging or perhaps discouraging feminist medieval studies. The editors would like to thank Margaret Schleissner, member of the Advisory Board, for having suggested the topic for this issue.

Part II of the conversation will appear in the Spring issue of *MFN*. We would especially like to hear from people in disciplines that are underrepresented in this issue, such as History, Art History, Philosophy, Religious Studies and others. But we would most like to hear from EVERYONE who has a reaction or a comment. Comments can be brief and in any case no longer than 1250 words. Please send submissions to E. Jane Burns, Women's Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3135 by June 1, 1995, or call with questions: 919 962-3908.

REPORT ON SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP GRADUATE STUDENT NETWORK



At Kalamazoo '94 a group of graduate student members of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship met to identify, discuss and work toward addressing issues of common concern. Since then, more than sixty graduate students have expressed an interest in creating a Graduate Student Network within SMFS, and I'm happy to be able to announce the opening of an electronic mailing list to serve this new network. I would also like to invite further participation from SMFS graduate students and interested faculty and others by summarizing new and proposed projects for the network.

INTRODUCING "MEDFEMGRAD"

This is a new electronic mailing list that has been set up (thanks to William MacLehose at Johns Hopkins University) to facilitate communication among graduate students in feminist medieval studies. While its function will very much depend on the uses that subscribers choose to make of it, it might serve best as a kind of electronic common room, providing a space for graduate students to meet and share information and resources. Users might, for instance, pool information about grants and fellowships (both on what funding is available from those who have recently written successful applications), pose questions and ask advice about selecting and approaching advisers, suggest organization and survival strategies for teaching and dissertation-writing, and offer reflection and suggestion (from recent veterans) about the job market. Archives of past messages will be available to new subscribers. To subscribe, send an email message to listserv@jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu that reads "subscribe medfemgrad" (with no punctuation), followed by your name. Send any questions to me or to Bill at macle_w@jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu.

WORK IN PROGRESS NETWORK

This project is aimed at creating links between medieval feminist graduate students and faculty members working in similar fields since such links are often difficult to establish from the resources of a single campus. The primary emphasis will be on matching graduate students, particularly those at work on articles or dissertations, with those SMFS members willing to receive, and offer responses to, students' work in progress. To this end, I am compiling a list of potential readers, along with their fields of interest, which can then be circulated to SMFS graduate students through Medfemgrad (or by mail for graduate students not on the internet). Graduate students will be encouraged to make initial contact with potential readers, in order to agree on an informal contract in advance: this would specify first, how much material the reader might be willing to receive, and second, when the graduate student could reasonably expect a response. This is one avenue through which SMFS members can offer powerful support to graduate students and their work. Potential readers are invited to contact me, by sending either their names, addresses, and fields of interest for inclusion on the list, or any further queries about the project. Graduate students who would like to receive a list of readers by post should send me their addresses. Since this project is in the exploratory stage, comments, suggestions and questions would be most welcome from all SMFS members.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We have tried to schedule a meeting for SMFS graduate students and interested others at Kalamazoo on Thursday, May 4 at 5:30 in Fetzer (check your programs for confirmation of time and place). The agenda should include a report from the Work in Progress Network, but will also offer graduate students a chance to generate and share ideas about future projects, to become acquainted with one another at an early stage in the conference, and to become involved with what should be an exciting and empowering organization.

*Jennifer Summit, English Dept., Johns Hopkins University
Graduate Student Representative*



“HOW DO YOU DO?” OR “HOW TO BE A FEMINIST MEDIEVALIST
ON THE JOB MARKET TODAY”



A lot of what takes place and what is at stake “on the market” these days can be summed up by the question of my title, “How do you do?” For that is really what faculties are supposed to want to know of the candidates they are considering: not just what sort of